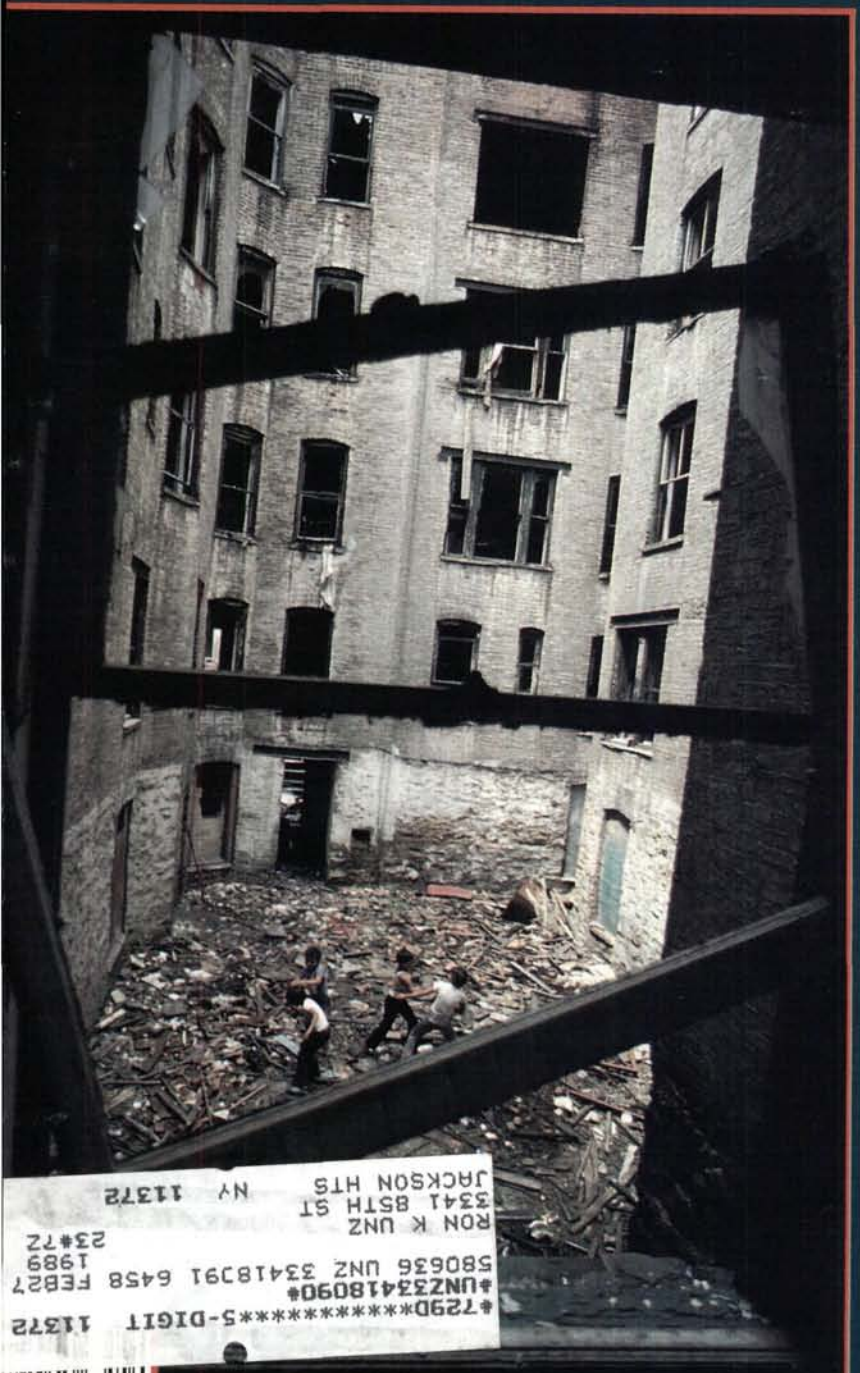
JUNE 13, 1988 • $2.25

Why *Glasnost* Will Never Work

GEORGE BUSH'S STICKY WICKET · GAUGUIN, FATHER OF THE MIDLIFE CRISIS

RENCH FRIES
THOUT GUILT:
HOW NO-CAL FAT
WILL CHANGE
AMERICA

THE NEW REPUBLIC



Deadly Neighborhoods

Almost everyone now agrees there's a destructive 'ghetto culture.' That's progress. Almost no one agrees about what causes it, or how to free people from its grip.

Christopher Jencks on the new politics of poverty.

RON K UNZ
3341 85TH ST
JACKSON HTS NY 11372

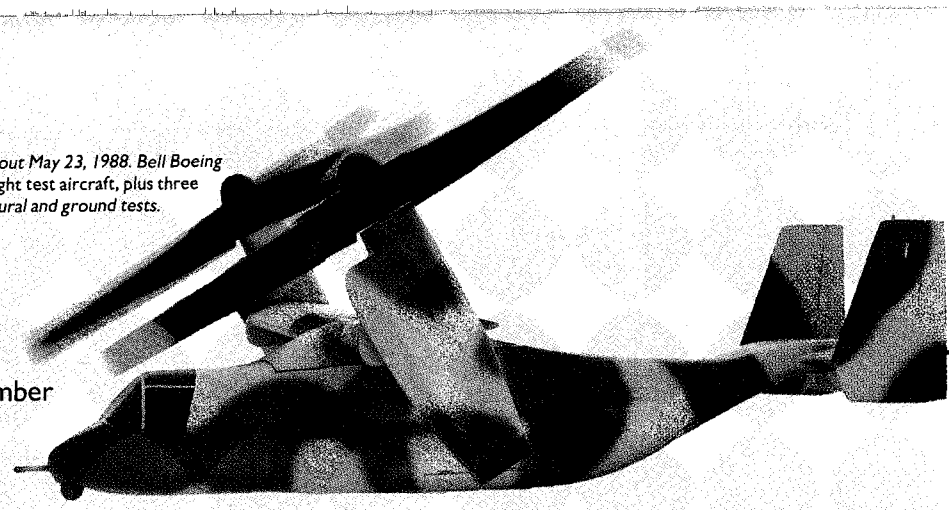
*T29D**********5-DIGIT 11372
UNZ33418090
5806 36 UNZ 33418391 6458 FEB27
1989
23*72

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE
OSPREY
DECISION

THE PRIMARY GOAL IS AFFORDABILITY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The first V-22 rolled out May 23, 1988. Bell Boeing currently is building six flight test aircraft, plus three others for structural and ground tests.

A weapon system must possess a number of "abilities." Maintainability. Reliability. Capability. Survivability.

Yet no system can survive its first major battle – the budget – without demonstrating another important "ability."

Affordability.

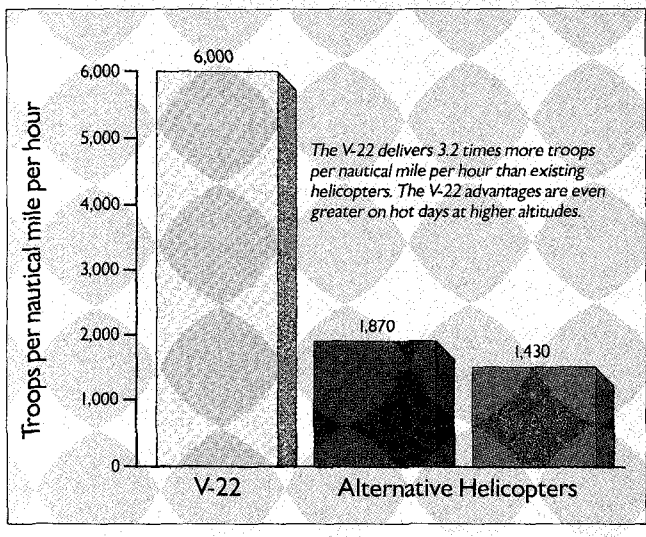
The Tiltrotor Team of Bell Boeing and the Department of the Navy is making sure the V-22 Osprey achieves that primary goal.

A cost-effective aircraft

A key factor in achieving affordability is tiltrotor technology, a technology that contributes to a lower system cost.

The V-22 will fly at turboprop speeds with its rotor systems horizontal, yet hover, land, take off and maneuver like a helicopter with its rotor systems vertical. It will fly low-level, at night, in adverse weather. And it will carry a mission payload of troops and equipment much further than any present helicopter.

Productivity Comparison



The V-22's tiltrotors make it more versatile than the helicopters it will replace. And we've added even more versatility with advanced design innovations that help reduce costs.

Lightweight yet strong graphite/epoxy laminate construction. Advanced aerodynamics. Redundant fly-by-wire flight control systems.

Tiltrotor flexibility plus these innovative design features give the aircraft "abilities" superior to those of existing helicopters. The V-22 will carry the same payload twice as fast over twice the distance at half the cost. It will be twice as reliable. It will require less than half the maintenance man-hours between flights. And it will be eight to 10 times more survivable.

A cost-conscious program

The V-22 was created to meet the team's initial challenge: develop one affordable aircraft to perform a variety of missions for all four branches of the military service. Missions as diverse as combat search and rescue, combat assault and resupply, aeromedical evacuation and long-range special operations.

To get an idea how efficiently the V-22 will satisfy each service's conditions, consider how it will benefit the Marine Corps – recipients of the first aircraft in 1991.

The V-22 will meet that branch's requirements at a total system cost which is at least 35% lower than the best alternative aircraft. It will need 67% fewer personnel to operate and maintain it. And that will free up 9,500 Marines for other combat duties.

Of course, designing one aircraft to do many jobs eliminates the need for other aircraft development programs, thereby helping reduce costs. And in addition to designing this cost-effective aircraft, we've designed an extremely cost-conscious program.

Schedule length and technical risks were identified and reduced through an extensive preliminary design phase. All technologies and materials were verified. Tests like wind tunnel modeling for 8,600 hours. Confirmation of structural strength and durability. Suitability of higher-twist rotor blades.

This exhaustive preliminary design and early testing permitted us to start the Full Scale Development phase with complete confidence and at acceptable risk.

An investment for the future

There is yet another factor that enhances the V-22's future affordability: increased production.

International military and civil tiltrotor demands will make the Osprey even more affordable. The more units produced, the lower the individual unit cost.

Affordability. It's been a driving force behind the V-22 tiltrotor from the beginning. And this "ability" will continue to be our primary goal well into the next century.

BELL BOEING

The V-22 Tiltrotor Team

A JOINT SERVICE PROGRAM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Bringing Up Baby

Conservatives are trying to figure out how to recapture the family issue. One proposal they hope will be popular is to extend the child care tax credit to parents who stay home with their kids. The argument is that the current tax credit for outside day care constitutes government discrimination against full-time mothers. That's wrong. In fact, the discrimination works the other way, against mothers who choose to work outside the home.

To see why, imagine two mothers, Jean and Joan. Case one: each mother stays home and takes care of her own child. No tax consequences. Case two: Joan and Jean decide to go to work. As what? As day-care supervisors. Joan takes care of Jean's child and Jean pays Joan $200 a week. Meanwhile Jean takes care of Joan's child and Joan pays Jean the same amount. Financially it's a wash for both of them.

Or is it? Not at all, because in case two both Jean and Joan owe income and Social Security taxes. If they are self-employed, Social Security alone will cost each of them about $1500. In short, working mothers who pay for child care bring an activity into the tax system that previously was performed tax-free. The net return from going to work is the amount they earn minus the amount they must pay for child care. But they must pay taxes on their working income and pay for their child care in post-tax dollars.

The current tax credit for child care only partially undoes this bias against mothers who work outside the home. It takes a fraction of the cost of professional child care out of the tax system. To extend the credit to mothers who don't work outside the home would double the bias. Their work raising their own kids—praiseworthy as it is—is already completely tax-free. The conservative proposal would give them a further tax credit to boot.

Some conservatives make no bones about this bias. They say society should actively encourage parents (they say parents, but they mean mothers) to stay home and take care of their own kids. But bribing mothers to stay at home is a dubious goal for social policy, and using the tax code to pursue it is even more dubious. And that's even leaving aside the basic question whether the conservative premise is correct that day care is bad for kids.

First, most mothers who take jobs and hire day care for their kids do so out of necessity, not by choice. Using the tax code to penalize them even more than it already does is unfair and largely pointless. For every mother who quits her job as a result of an extended day-care credit, there will be a dozen who simple swallow the increased bias and keep working.

Second, mothers with outside jobs are generally poorer than mothers who raise their kids full time. The notion that the typical users of outside day care are two-lawyer, BMW-and-Volvo-station-wagon yuppie couples, whereas full-time mothers are struggling old-fashioned blue-collar ethnics, is simply wrong. Giving a new tax break to the second group would make the tax code more regressive.

Third, at the time of tax reform two years ago, it was agreed that the tax code should be used to raise revenue as neutrally as possible. It should not be used to affect behavior through various subsidies and penalties. The sound reasoning was that these curlicues make the tax code too complex; that every deduction or credit means you need a higher basic tax rate to raise the same amount of revenue; and that social policy made through the tax code doesn't get the same kind of skeptical scrutiny as equally costly policies made directly through government spending.

Finally, even those who believe that mothers shouldn't go to work outside the home ought to be a bit more hesitant about using the government as an instrument for imposing this view on others. It is conservatives generally who hold this belief. Yet these same conservatives expend most of their breath expounding on the need for the govern-

continued on page 42

WHAT'S BEHIND THE SONG & DANCE?

Watch "WASHINGTON WEEK IN REVIEW"

The most sophisticated analysis of Election '88 by Washington's most experienced journalists! Moderated by Paul Duke.

Watch it on PBS, Fridays at 8 PM. Check local listings. "WASHINGTON WEEK IN REVIEW" is underwritten by Ford Motor Company and Ford Aerospace Corporation.

Ford

A production of WETA/Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,830

WASHINGTON, D.C. — JUNE 13, 1988

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
MICHAEL KINSLEY
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN
Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, ANN HULBERT, MORTON M. KONDRACKE, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, ROBERT WRIGHT
Associate Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN
New Republic Books Editor
(Basic Books)
BILL NEWLIN
1988 Politics
HENDRIK HERTZBERG
Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER
Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Music
EDWARD ROTHSTEIN
Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD
Art
MARK STEVENS
Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP
Contributing Editors
ROBERT COLES, HENRY FAIRLIE, JAMES K. GLASSMAN, VINT LAWRENCE, LOUIS MENAND, ROBERT B. REICH, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, RICHARD L. STROUT, E. V. THAW, ANNE TYLER, NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN, MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY
Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE
Assistant Editor
LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH
Production Associate
ELDON S. SARTE
Literary Assistant
ANDREW MENDELSOHN
Reporter-Researchers
RICHARD BLOW, WENDY KOHN, WARD MERRITT, ARI POSNER

President and Publisher
JEFFREY L. DEARTH
Associate Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON
Circulation Director
TOM HICKS
Controller
JEAN GANDY
Advertising Manager
JENNIFER BARRETT
Circulation Manager
PATTY JONES
Accounting Manager
MARIA F. SALATTI
Circulation Assistant
KRISTIN CONRADI
Advertising Assistant
DARLENE BUSCAGLIO
Accounting Assistant
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER
Back Issues and Reception
JENNIFER WILLIAMS
Corporate Marketing
GUY STODDARD
Leadership Network Advertising
ROBERT F. SENNOTT JR.

4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... BRINGING UP BABY

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... The Postal Service, a portrait of Dukakis, &c.

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... GET IT OVER WITH
Bush is wrong, Reagan's right: the time for principles is over on a deal with Noriega.
THE PALESTINIAN PACIFIST ...
... THE LEBANESE WARLORDS

8 **CHARLES PAUL FREUND** ..... THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST
From the summit to the suburbs.

10 **FRED BARNES** ..... CAMPAIGN '88: STICKY WICKET
Bush's strategy is not to define himself, but to define Dukakis.

12 **RONALD BROWNSTEIN** ..... POSTCARD L.A.: BLOWOUT
California's racial politics and an oil well.

13 **MARK HOSENBALL** ..... THE PRESS: DIRTY 'HARRY'
The Bush-*contra*-drug connection is a great story. Too bad it's probably not true.

15 **EDWARD DOLNICK** ..... HOLD THE GUILT
Calorie-free fat is about to do for eating what the Pill did for sex.

16 **ETHAN A. NADELMANN** ..... SHOOTING UP
What, exactly, is the relationship between drugs and crime?

18 **DAVID SATTER** ..... WHY GLASNOST CAN'T WORK
Glasnost questions everything but communism. *Perestroika* reforms everything but the Party's control of the economy. A pessimistic report from the Soviet Union.

22 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: SPOTS BEFORE OUR EYES
Making TV commercials may be good for film business, but it's bad for film aesthetics.

23 **CHRISTOPHER JENCKS** ..... DEADLY NEIGHBORHOODS
The destructive grip of ghetto culture is clear, but how to break it is not.

31 **GEORGE BRADLEY** ..... POEM *Keats's Handkerchief*

32 **THOMAS R. EDWARDS** ..... A CHILD OF THE CENTURY
The New Confessions by William Boyd

34 **THOMAS O. MELIA** ..... TRIAL AND TERROR
The Stalker Affair by John Stalker

37 **J. M. COETZEE** ..... THE LIBERAL RETREAT
White Boy Running by Christopher Hope

39 **JED PERL** ..... THE KING OF DROPOUTS
Gauguin escaped to live out his fantasy in the tropics, where his electric colors were born.

43 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... UNHAPPY DAYS

COVER photo of the South Bronx by © Ethan Hoffman/Archive Pictures Inc. Article on page 23.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 198, Number 24, Issue 3,830, June 13, 1988. (Printed in the U.S. on May 25, 1988.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, July 18 & 25, Aug. 8 & 15, and Sept. 12 & 19, 1988) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $56; foreign, $81; Canada, $70. Back issues, $2.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1988 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322.** For subscription problems call **800-525-0643.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

MAIL MEND

To the editors:
Although letter carriers appreciate TNR's acknowledgment of our competence in delivering the mail ("Mail Menopause," April 25), we disagree with your call for repeal of the private express statutes, which grant the U.S. Postal Service a regulated monopoly over the delivery of addressed first- and third-class mail. The analysis of Postal Service productivity growth is grossly incorrect. By suggesting that holding postage rate increases to the rate of inflation since 1971 reflects poor productivity growth, TNR ignores that direct taxpayer subsidies to the USPS, which covered 25 percent of postal expenses in 1971, have been completely eliminated over the past 17 years.

Repeal of the private express statutes would be a disaster. Private competition would produce a fragmented postal system, subject to disruptions in service due to general market instability. Many other services, such as the free forwarding of mail, would be dropped altogether. TNR states: "Perhaps, then, a deregulated postal system would be comparable to the present phone system: long-distance information transmission would be competitive, while local transmission . . . was still monopolized." Ironically, this describes the Postal Service as it exists today. The long-distance transmission of mail is competitive—USPS contracts out to private trucking, airline, and rail firms for intercity mail transport—while the local delivery is monopolized. In your scenario, competing long-distance mail firms would contract local pick-up and delivery services from the Postal Service. This is unrealistic. Linking every location in every city in a cohesive system requires a single entity. Since unregulated private monopolies provide less service and charge more to maximize profit, that entity should be a regulated public monopoly—the U.S. Postal Service.

VINCENT R. SOMBROTTO
President
National Association of Letter Carriers
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
You have a problem with percentage. In "Mail Menopause" you say the CPI is up 274 percent since 1971. You mean that it is up by a factor of 2.74, or 174 percent. The increase in first-class postage is more complex. Postage changed from six to eight cents in 1971. Using the eight cent figure, postage was up by a factor of 2.75, or 175 percent, when it was 22 cents. I would think that you would want to use the current 25 cent figure when computing the percentage increase. The ratio of 25 to eight is 3.12, or 212 percent. Thus, postage has increased at a faster rate than the CPI.

RICHARD ROSENBAUM
Palo Alto, California

To the editors:
I just wanted to compliment you on your recent editorial extolling the potential benefits to be reaped from a U.S. Postal Service actually exposed to good ol' capitalistic competition. I would have written earlier but—you guessed it—I received that particular issue of TNR a week and a half late. Furthermore, the magazine arrived in such a mutilated condition that it was almost unreadable. Are you sure you can't send my future issues UPS?

DAVE BASSETT
Indianapolis, Indiana

KOCH QUOTES

To the editors:
" 'Crazy' Eddie?" (May 16) does not do justice to THE NEW REPUBLIC's usual high standards of journalistic accuracy. In attempting to rationalize his criticisms of Jesse Jackson, Ed Koch quotes an exchange with "an old friend" throughout which conversation *he* talks in paragraphs and *she* responds in monosyllables (2 "no's" and 4 "yes's" to be precise). The account is dubious on two grounds. First: the 20-minute confrontation was reported to me—in extenso—immediately thereafter; and second: anyone who knows the mayor's "old friend" knows she always expresses herself well, but *never* in monosyllables.

She's my old friend too. We've been married for 38 years.

R. PETER STRAUS
New York, New York

DRAWING COMPARISONS

To the editors:
It's a pleasure to illustrate a cover story by Hendrik Hertzberg, but I take issue with his suggestion that "Dukakis is a caricature waiting to be drawn" ("The Tortoise," May 16). I've drawn him a dozen times and, frankly, he's a pain in the neck! True, he's easy for a quick likeness, much as a scribbling of jowls and a ski nose can represent Nixon. But for detail, Dukakis presents several technical problems. For starters, he lacks a forehead. So does Reagan, but its absence serves our 40th president well. Unfortunately for Dukakis, it brings his bushy eyebrows and mop of dark hair to an untidy collision. As for his nose, the size and shape of it are indeed wondrous to behold. But the angle at which it protrudes forces me to eliminate one of his eyes when I draw him in a three-quarter view. Finally, his inscrutable demeanor, i.e., blank expression, narrows the number of ways there are to draw him. Dukakis has two basic looks, one when he's smiling and one when he's not. I keep studying his face in the newsweeklies and on TV for a peek behind the mask, but so far without success.

Hertzberg is onto something about Dukakis, though, from the neck down. His short stature, narrow, sloping shoulders, and uncomfortable stiffness are great for the cartoonist as well as the impressionist. One only had to see Dukakis squirm in a televised bear hug from Mario Cuomo to recall Nixon's similar grimace when, in 1972, he became Sammy Davis Jr.'s main squeeze. Dukakis's physique is nothing if not honest, and he deserves credit for that.

TAYLOR JONES
Staten Island, New York

CONGRESSIONAL PINK SLIP

To the editors:
In the House debate over the amendment to require notification of plant closings, Speaker Jim Wright asked his colleagues: "If your livelihood was about to be terminated in 60 days, wouldn't you like to know about it?" ("Firing Lines" by Robert Wright, May 2). What the Speaker should have pointed out is that he and every other member of Congress (as well as the president) actually has *more* than 60 days' notice when the public decides to relieve them of their duties (from early November to mid-January). Maybe we should deny this little courtesy to the 167 representatives who voted against the amendment and the president who vetoed it.

MARK S. BYRNES
Austin, Texas
continued on page 42

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 13, 1988

GET IT OVER WITH

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Poor George Bush. After seven years proving that he has no ideological gyroscope aside from automatic alignment with Ronald Reagan, he decided to reinvent himself as bold and independent. And wouldn't you know it? Of all the issues to use as a showcase for his new persona, he picked one that Reagan is right about: this whole bargaining-with-a-drug-trafficker thing, as Bush might put it.

As we write, there are rumors (not for the first time) of an imminent deal between the Reagan administration and Panama's Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. Assuming Reagan doesn't give away the entire ranch, it will be a good thing. Delaying an arrangement that would liberate Panamanians from both Noriega and our own economic stranglehold is no favor to anyone.

Obviously it would be nice if we weren't in this mess in the first place. And, in retrospect, it's easy to gripe about how we got here. The administration might, for example, have enlisted the aid of other American nations in trying to oust Noriega. On the other hand, things happened fast. First some enterprising Florida prosecutors indicted Noriega. Next Eric Arturo Delvalle, then the titular president of Panama, "dismissed" Noriega and ran for cover. We threw our support behind Delvalle and hit Panama with economic sanctions, in hopes that the resulting disarray would mobilize opposition to Noriega so quickly that he'd be gone before the economy was wrecked. (Ever since the miraculously painless ouster of Ferdinand Marcos, we've assumed that the Force is with us in exercises

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of this sort.) Alas, two months later the opposition's tamed and the economy's in critical condition; in a matter of weeks we've reduced economic activity by around 40 percent.

No one outside the State Department is enthusiastic about military intervention, so we're left with three options, all uninspiring. (1) *Hold our breath till Panama turns blue*: Keep waiting for a popular insurrection, even as continued economic deterioration converts more and more Panamanians from Noriega haters into Yankee haters. (2) *Surrender abjectly*: End the sanctions and (*a*) give up on relations with Panama, possibly ceding it to Soviet influence; or (*b*) try to forge a tenuous, bizarrely awkward working relationship with Noriega. (3) *Surrender non-abjectly*: Bargain from our present position of weakness and settle for minor surgery: get Noriega out of the country, for a while at least, jump in with emergency economic aid, and make the aid explicitly contingent on some degree of democratization—and implicitly contingent on Noriega's never returning to power.

In short, the choice is between an unmitigated foreign policy disaster and a mitigated foreign policy disaster. We'll take the mitigated one. But that won't do for Men of Principle, like George Bush, Michael Dukakis, and seekers of elected office everywhere. Bush has enunciated a law: you don't deal with drug traffickers. This is an alluring line. It sounds very much like "You don't deal with terrorists," which is undeniably a valid principle. But once you get past the phonetic parallel, there isn't much of a comparison. The purpose of terrorism is to extract concessions from the terrorized, so bargaining with terrorists is by definition a victory for terrorism. Bargaining with drug dealers is unfortunate and unpleasant, but whether or not it is a victory for drug dealing depends on the details of the bargain.

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	IVAN THE BEARABLE	—	1
2.	A SPLENDID LITTLE BORE	1	6
3.	SMUG SHOT	—	1
4.	PITS AND THE PENDULUM	—	1
5.	LITE AT THE END	4	11
6.	STASH IN THE PAN?	5	6
7.	DANDELION WHINE	*	2
8.	LOVE THAT DIRTY WATER	—	1
9.	PUMPKIN PYRE	—	1
10.	CHICAGO LOOPED	—	1

1. IVAN THE BEARABLE

Summit. These summits are already ordinary affairs, and the reason is the complete decline of the Soviet threat. U.S.-Soviet relations are not a campaign issue, the Afghanistan pullout played remarkably blandly, Chuck Norris has already said he won't be fighting any more movie Russians, and Stallone may have miscalculated badly.

2. A SPLENDID LITTLE BORE

Drug warfare. At long last, sir, have you no shame? Three months ago Reagan proclaimed victory over the drug trade. Now he says there's an emergency, and only a bipartisan commission can handle it. Never mind the eye-glazing audacity of the thing; the useful point is that only three months ago nobody gave a damn about something that is again a cause of hysteria.

3. SMUG SHOT

Dukakis. Is Dukakis ever going to get specific about anything? There's a growing sense that the campaign press has let him get away with apple pie platitudes. Nice work if you can get it, but even some Democrats are concerned that his campaign is wasting time being smug about Bush's problems, and not nailing down a constituency based on his own attributes.

4. PITS AND THE PENDULUM

The Dann case. Why wasn't something done about Laurie Dann before she shot up a Winnetka school? Perhaps because the question of madness has become so ambiguous in the culture. We're simply no longer sure what madness is, much less what—if anything—constitutes its cure. When we thought we knew, we had lobotomies and snake pits. Now we seem unable to act at all.

5. LITE AT THE END

Bush. Hey, is that some light between Bush and Reagan? How many points has Bush made on loyalty anyway? How much has any Republican benefited from Reagan's embrace? How far would Bush wander? Who else are conservatives going to vote for? Except for summitry, who's paying attention to Reagan anyway? Bush could probably pull farther away, but then he'd have to say something.

6. STASH IN THE PAN?

Drug legalization. Now that legalization has made its lightning way from the elite press to the middlebrow newsweeklies to the early evening local TV news, there are encouraging signs of a genuine debate. Anti-legals are attacking the pro-legals' liquor prohibition paradigm. Mayor Schmoke energized this story. Who'll keep it alive?

7. DANDELION WHINE

Suburbs. The suburbs lost their cachet for the younger middle class a long time ago, but now things are getting serious. In reality, suburbs are becoming bland cities: dense, gridlocked, but unstimulating. In the cultural imagination, however, they are places of horror. The Stephen King generation of novels and movies are all set there, and now Eric Fischl's paintings of suburban emptiness are getting press too.

8. LOVE THAT DIRTY WATER

Beach blight '88. Happy Memorial Day, there's a slick off the Jersey coast. That's bad, but what's really a shame is that beach blight is still the only environmental story that sells. Meanwhile, genetic variety is at a catastrophic stage, coastal tropical forests are virtually gone everywhere, and bird counts in the U.S. have dropped alarmingly.

9. PUMPKIN PYRE

Hiss-Chambers. Hiss has published another book, Chambers's pumpkin farm has been made a national historic site, there's an ongoing debate over *Witness* in *The New Criterion*, and a weird Washington group has just gone hiking to sight a prothonotary warbler. This case long ago became the litmus test of American politics; it will never go away. So what's the truth about that damn typewriter?

10. CHICAGO LOOPED

Chicago. They're throwing satirical art in jail, there are raving anti-Semitic lunatics in high office, the White Sox seem headed for St. Petersburg, and Wrigley's going under the lights. Chicago seems to have given up on the New York model, and had its own swiped by Miami. But did it have to become the Lakeside Lotus Land?

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If using an indictment as a bargaining chip is a corruption of the judicial system, as Men of Principle contend, then the system is hopelessly corrupt already. Prosecutors use indictments as bargaining chips every day, in plea bargains and when they drop indictments for people—even drug dealers—who turn state's evidence. And actually, Reagan will be getting a better deal than the typical prosecutor, since all he will be giving up is an indictment that stood no chance of bearing fruit. Noriega, so far as we know, never made reservations to fly to Miami and turn himself in. Besides, prosecuting foreign heads of state is something that just isn't done much, and there are good practical reasons why it isn't. If we had held Ferdinand Marcos up to American standards of law, and refused to compromise them, Cory Aquino would now be dividing her time between making speeches to garden clubs and doing American Express commercials.

Of all the Men of Principle, Bush is the last one who should be up on his high horse right now. He, after all, was part of the administration that knowingly tolerated Noriega's drug trafficking for years. In fact, there is some evidence that Bush himself did some of the knowing toleration. Dukakis can at least claim consistency on the issue; he's long been committed to high-minded legal principles, notably in international affairs.

If Bush were truly bold, he'd have exploited this fact. Dukakis's reverence for international law, and his affinity for clean, aboveboard foreign policy, can, unless tempered by some realpolitalk, be cast as naïveté. If Bush had laid out the pragmatic argument for dealing with Noriega, and then patronizingly explained to Dukakis ("Let me help you here, Mike") that things are tough in the big, bad world of international relations, he might have scored some points. But that would have required defying the prevailing political winds—actually stepping out of the pack and shaping public opinion. In other words, that would have called for someone capable of leadership.

NOTEBOOK

☐ A MOUTH FOR A MOUTH: We reported in this space several months ago the tribulations of our correspondent David Satter attempting to get a visa from the Soviet Union. Ultimately it required the U.S. State Department to refuse a visa to Vladimir Posner, the Soviet media face man, before the Soviets relented. Satter's pessimistic report on *glasnost* begins on page 18.

☐ HOW'S DAT AGAIN?

"WE NOW OFFER DAT. What's DAT? Digital Audio Tape, the latest innovation in high fidelity sound reproduction." —ad for General Motors, *U.S. News and World Report*, page 63

"DAT'S ALL, FOLKS. If you've been awaiting the U.S. arrival of digital audiotape recorders, forget it." —same magazine, page 77

THE PALESTINIAN PACIFIST . . .

Pending further hearings, the Israeli High Court has stayed the deportation of Mubarak Awad, a Jerusalem-born U.S. citizen and self-styled Palestinian pacifist. The government has not offered any compelling explanation of how security or justice would be served by expelling Awad. Still, the attention the world media have lavished on Awad's troubles is bizarre. After all, his visa expired half a year ago; all governments routinely deport people who have overstayed their official welcome. Moreover, he is not being sent back to some country where his life would be at peril, but to the United States, where he has lived since 1969. What has attracted the *bien pensants* to Awad's case is the novelty of a Palestinian pacifist. One reporter wrote that, thanks to Awad, elements of civil disobedience had been integrated into the strategy of the Palestinian uprising, as if a consumer boycott coordinated with the hurling of Molotov cocktails is a triumph for nonviolence. Not being pacifist ourselves, we don't reproach the Palestinians for not turning the other cheek. But this stuff about Palestinian pacifism is an improvisation aimed at eagerly credulous sympathizers abroad. Awad is just the latest in a parade of Palestinian phonies who have impressed *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, for example, who announced him to be a follower of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. Almost immediately following this accolade, the Palestinian Gandhi issued his imprimatur to the rock throwers. Can you blame him? Maybe not. But please don't call him a pacifist.

. . . THE LEBANESE WARLORDS

Trying to understand the carnage in Lebanon, Westerners have tended to attribute it to religious zealotry. When religious sectarianism swallows up personal identity and supplants politics, it unleashes bloody passions. For a while, this was an accurate explanation. The battle lines were clear at any moment, even though the morning's enemy might become the evening's happenstance ally. The shots were fired across religious and ethnic lines: Christians against Sunnis, Christians against Palestinians, Shiites against Sunnis, Shiites against Palestinians, and so on.

Lebanon was a challenge to the ingenious souls who devote themselves to dreaming up constitutional formulas for conflict-ridden societies. The nation survived for a time under an imaginatively contrived power-sharing arrangement. But even during its best years, it experienced an augury of what has been happening more recently. This is violence not across sectarian lines but within them: Christians against Christians, Shiites against Shiites, and so on.

One reason is that in Lebanon people no longer see much of anybody outside their own group. Mutual insularity has made their external enmities moot. But these insulated groups are not communities; they are serpentine byways of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intracommunal hatred. In recent weeks this hatred of one's own has affected—in increasing order of bloodiness—the Maronites, the Palestinians, and the Shiites.

In accord with the old constitution, a Maronite, Amin Gemayel, is serving his last month as president. The intra-Christian slaughter may be the Lebanese equivalent of our presidential primaries. But the next president, like Gemayel, won't exercise authority beyond the environs of Ba'abda Palace. There is no real public stake in which of these fighting fascist bands kills more of the other's soldiers. As with the other sects, no Maronite militia is more benign than another. Their struggles are not over policy but over turf.

It is not very different among the Palestinians, whose conflicts are vested by observers with all kinds of deeper meanings. Even the simple sobriquets "moderate" and "extreme" actually mean almost nothing, least of all vis-à-vis Israel. Still, the factions battle furiously in the Palestinian shantytowns. More Palestinians—combatants and innocents—have been killed by Palestinians in Lebanon in recent months than by Israelis in the occupied territories. The current Palestinian fratricide follows a widely touted conciliation agreement, engineered by Syrian president Hafez Assad, between Yasir Arafat and his Palestinian rivals. It didn't last a week. The current fighting is probably about the right to be Syria's agent in sabotaging the peace efforts of Secretary of State George Shultz. The bloodletting does not trouble Assad at all since it weakens the victor almost as much as it does the vanquished.

Assad cares more about the intra-Shiite frays in the slums of Beirut. He does not want Hezbollah, the Party of God, to make any progress toward establishing an Islamic Republic of West Beirut, which would be aligned with Iran. At the same time, Assad doesn't want to break with Iran, lest this give comfort to his oldest nemesis, Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Meanwhile Iran doesn't completely control the Hezbollah, as the failure of its attempt to stop the shooting has shown. Like its rival militia, the Amal, it has its own dashes of authentic ideological and religious fervor (in Amal's case, non-religious fervor). These hardly justify the several hundred deaths and even more woundings and maimings caused by the latest Hezbollah-Amal fighting.

These explanations of the strife in Lebanon are deeply unsatisfying to the Western political intelligence, which yearns for causes that can be compromised or conciliated. The fighting reflects the bitter failure of each sect's almost millenarian hopes. There was the Maronite expectation that after Israel trounced the Palestinians in 1982, the drift away from Sunni hegemony would leave the Francophone Christians in control. There was the confidence that, despite the PLO defeat, Palestinianism was the liberating destiny of all Arabs. There was the heady belief that the long festering grievance of the Shiite masses—humiliated, disinherited, and martyred—would now be avenged. None of this has come to pass. The cynical men who mobilized the common yearnings as a tool of their own ambitions no longer act on the big stage. They are back where they started, returned to family and clan, where everyone outside the immediate ambit is the enemy.

CAMPAIGN '88

STICKY WICKET

GEORGE BUSH suffers from too much definition, not too little. He's Gerald Ford without the pizzazz, as columnist Mark Shields puts it. (Michael Dukakis is Jimmy Carter without the humor.) Bush plays to type, a hyperactive but unexciting klutz. In Los Angeles on May 17 he visited a home in a neighborhood where drugs and gang fights are common. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Bush explained his drop-by to residents this way: "We won't, ah . . . I didn't want, ah, really just, ah. We were in the neighborhood." Two weeks earlier, he made an appearance at Garfield High School in Los Angeles, where math teacher Jaime Escalante, the hero of the movie *Stand and Deliver*, is famous for having spurred poor Hispanic kids to go to college. Bush said it is "fine" not to go to college. "Intellectual achievement isn't the only gauge of success in life," he declared. Back in early May, in Idaho, Bush noted of his relationship with President Reagan: "We've had some sex . . . setbacks."

Reagan's substance has rubbed off on Bush, but not his style. There's no magic in Bush's performance as a campaigner. He's failed to master any of Reagan's stump specialities—good-natured humor, riveting anecdotes, the use of hard-line ideology to stir the faithful. Bush's funniest line is the one about wanting to be known as the "education president." But he's not joking when he says it.

The conventional wisdom that Bush still has a lot of defining of himself to do shouldn't be taken seriously. True, his advisers pay lip service to it as crucial to Bush's chances of gaining ground on Dukakis. But we've heard this before. A year ago his aides said he'd soon add definition to his candidacy by producing fresh proposals in a series of college commencement speeches. None appeared. Then last fall, at the time of his formal announcement, they made the same promise. Again nothing happened. Expect the same this time. Aside from occasional displays of independence from Reagan and a series of specific proposals on energy, the budget, etc., Bush really doesn't plan much.

The Bush strategy is to define Dukakis. "It is very hard to elect George Bush in an election that focuses primarily on George Bush," argues Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, now a conservative stalwart of the Bush campaign. "It is remarkably easy to elect George Bush in an election that focuses primarily on defining Mike Dukakis." Bush has already likened Dukakis to Jimmy Carter, which isn't a compliment. In speeches in April and May, Bush said that "Carter hangs over the Democrats like a shadow, an unwanted reminder of the failure of their policies that last time they were in power." Dukakis, he said, is "trying to sell that same old Democratic bill of goods. More taxes. More spending.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More government control over your lives."

That's only for starters. The tough stuff probably won't come until the fall, the thrust being that Dukakis is a leftist whose views and values clash with those of most Americans. "Dukakis wants to be known as the Northern liberal Jimmy Carter," says Gingrich. "We're going to prove he's to the left of George McGovern." Richard Bond, Bush's deputy campaign manager, cites "the Brookline syndrome, the personification of the brie-and-chablis sensibility," as a major issue against Dukakis. Dukakis lives in the Boston suburb of Brookline. A Bush campaign aide said the decision at the Brookline town meeting in 1984 to dispense with the Pledge of Allegiance will be used against Dukakis, as will Dukakis's veto of legislation requiring the pledge be recited in public schools each day. "When the veto was overriden, legislators stood and sang 'God Bless America,' " the aide said. The Bush plan also calls for debunking Dukakis's role in the "Massachusetts miracle," zinging his foreign policy views as isolationist, and attacking his controversial program of giving prisoners, even murderers, weekend furloughs. Gingrich wants Bush to ask Dukakis in a debate, "Did you really think murderers would come back on Monday?"

ONE REASON the Bush campaign won't go full bore yet is money. What's left of the $27 million that can be spent legally in the primaries must be saved to finance the Bush operation at the Republican National Convention in August. Still, Bush and his advisers are alarmed at the favorable impression Dukakis is creating with only Jesse Jackson as his Democratic opponent. "He looks like a moderate beating Jesse Jackson every week," complains Bond. Worse, moderate and conservative Democrats are voting for Dukakis in the primaries to thwart Jackson. These include many "Reagan Democrats," who voted for Reagan in 1980 and 1984. Bush can't win this year unless he holds on to a sizable chunk of them, and tarring Dukakis as a leftist may help.

A theory voiced by dissident Bushies is that now is the best time to confront Dukakis with examples of leftism from his Massachusetts past. Dukakis must face Democratic primary voters in a few more states, appear before the national convention in July, and also appease Jackson. This makes it difficult to repudiate his past and scoot to the center. That's the theory, at any rate. Bush himself doesn't seem to buy it, nor do most of his top campaign aides. "Bush has his own internal time clock," says Bond. There's a risk that by going easy on Dukakis now, Bush will fall so far behind he'd never be able to make up the ground. This happened to Ford in 1976. But Bush strategists figure the risk is small.

What's odd about the clamor for Bush to define himself is that it's hard to find an issue on which he doesn't have a position. After more than seven years of touting Reagan's policies, he's pretty well defined. Except for some relatively minor points—money for Head Start and Pell grants, combating acid rain, plea bargaining with Gen. Manuel Noriega—Bush is the same as Reagan. What he lacks is Reagan's passion for conservative stands. Bush is a lukewarm Reagan.

That's enough for most conservatives. Predictions that the Christian right and other offshoots of the conservative movement would be trouble for Bush have proved wrong. Pat Robertson is slated to appear at three campaign "unity" events. Robertson's campaign manager, Marc Nuttle, is working at the Republican National Committee to lure Robertson supporters. Jack Kemp has agreed to join a Republican "truth squad" and denounce Dukakis. He and Pete du Pont are set to appear with Robertson at the unity events. Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota, who backed Kemp for the Republican nomination, says he's persuaded Bushies really want conservatives involved in the campaign.

While satisfying conservatives, Bush hasn't been adroit enough to get credit from the press for emerging from the president's shadow. If he played up his small differences with Reagan, he might. But he's been amazingly unobtrusive. In a speech to police officers in Los Angeles on May 18, he declared that the vice president in a Bush administration would be "in charge of every aspect of federal drug policy." That would make the veep a "drug czar," which is something Reagan opposes. But Bush never called it that, so he got little credit for taking an independent stand. On Mikhail Gorbachev, Bush is more critical than Reagan. Reagan says Gorbachev is different from (and better than) all his predecessors in the Kremlin. Bush, in a speech in Albuquerque on May 12, said Gorbachev "gives the illusion of being a different kind of a Soviet leader. And stylistically, he is." Beyond that, he's the same as the others, Bush suggested. Again he didn't play up the contrast with Reagan. Again it got little attention.

WHEN BUSH finally trumpeted a difference, he was stupidly shortsighted. In his May 18 speech, he said, "I won't bargain with terrorists, and I won't bargain with drug dealers either, whether they're on U.S. or foreign soil." His office made sure the world knew he was talking about Noriega. Then word was leaked that Bush was lobbying Reagan to give up any idea of dropping drug smuggling charges against Noriega. This was hardly a profile in courage. He buckled to public sentiment and gave up an issue against Dukakis, who'd criticized the plea bargaining with Noriega. A governor doesn't understand the tradeoffs you have to make in the real world to achieve peace and democracy, Bush could have said. What's more, Dukakis is mindlessly legalistic to prefer keeping an unenforceable indictment on the books to running a drug-dealing dictator out of power. Now Bush can't say that.

Reagan went along happily with Bush's apostasy on Noriega. Bush has virtual carte blanche with him. The only trouble Reagan caused was by trying too hard to be helpful. When he got a draft of his May 11 speech endorsing Bush, Reagan tossed out all the paragraphs of biographical boilerplate about the veep. Instead, he handwrote a passage on a yellow legal pad saying he'd do anything neces-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sary to get Bush elected. The new passage was brief and none too fulsome, and reporters treated the endorsement as halfhearted. Reagan was thunderstruck.

There's a simple way for Reagan to make it up to Bush. He can lead the attack on Dukakis this fall as a dangerous lefty. Campaigning side by side with Bush will only make Bush seem smaller. But campaigning noisily against Dukakis across the South and in ethnic enclaves in the North might win over some Reagan Democrats. No doubt Reagan's willing. All Bush has to do is ask.

FRED BARNES

POSTCARD L.A.

BLOWOUT

NEW YORKERS may not admit to many reasons for envying Los Angeles, but here's one: it looks as though L.A. will get through the Democratic primary on June 7 without the racial strife that dominated the Apple's spring brawl. Jesse Jackson faced some tough questions at a meeting with Jewish leaders on May 18, and there's been some sniping at him by other Jewish groups dismayed by his views on Israel. But the tension shows no sign of reaching New York's incendiary levels.

That didn't surprise politicians here. Los Angeles is a spectacularly diverse city (over 80 languages are spoken in city schools), and it has not been immune to racial conflict. But through the 1960s and 1970s the city's political power structure opened to blacks and Jews, and in the 1980s it is slowly but measurably opening for Hispanics and Asians. Much credit for that goes to the city's low-keyed, conciliatory black mayor, Tom Bradley. Bradley has been elected four times by a powerful Jewish-black coalition, with significant support also coming from Hispanics and organized labor. Serene and remote, Bradley is the antithesis of New York's Ed Koch, cautious and as tight-lipped as Koch is voluble. One reason Jackson's campaign here has not become a fight between blacks and Jews is that Bradley, L.A.'s top black official, has resisted pressure to endorse him.

But as Bradley prepares to seek re-election in next April's mayoral race, centrifugal forces are straining his coalition. In recent months conflicts between the white (and largely Jewish) Westside and (Hispanic) East and (black) South Central Los Angeles have been as steady as the sunshine.

The city's response to its epidemic of gang violence is a case in point. Earlier this year, when an Asian woman was shot to death by gang members in Westwood, a popular hangout for young whites near UCLA, the city erupted into action. Local City Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky proposed a $25,000 reward, the police stepped up patrols, and officials launched an all-out search for the killer. Black leaders were rightly outraged by the intensity of the response, which seemed to suggest that whereas frequent gang-related murders in black South Central were an unfortunate fact of life, killings in Westwood could not be tolerated.

The same schism between minority communities and white liberal Westside has also opened up on the region's most politically dynamic issue: the efforts to restrain Southern California's explosive growth. L.A. County's population is expected to jump from 8.4 million to 9.3 million over the next seven years, with the fastest increase coming among Hispanics. To many white Westside homeowners, continued growth means more traffic and pollution in an area already overburdened with both. To the minorities, growth means more jobs and opportunity in an area where they are unequally distributed.

Bradley sides firmly with the forces of growth. Yaroslavsky, who first emerged as an activist on behalf of Soviet Jews, is expected to challenge Bradley in the mayoral race next spring as the anti-growth champion. That race threatens to set off the direct racial conflicts (most pointedly the Jewish-black split) that L.A. so far has avoided. Already polls show that whites (and Jews in particular) give Bradley much less credit for his handling of crime, growth, and traffic than blacks or Hispanics do.

THESE WIDENING racial divisions are most apparent over rival initiatives on this fall's ballot to determine whether Occidental Petroleum Corp. can drill for oil beneath the spectacular Pacific Palisades, overlooking the ocean just north of Santa Monica. Occidental believes the site contains the second-largest oil field discovered in California in the past 30 years. With Yaroslavsky leading the anti-drilling forces and Bradley backing Occidental's plans (though officially neutral on the initiatives), many view this unlikely battle as a dress rehearsal for the mayor's race.

Yaroslavsky says this speculation is "consultants' small talk," but the coalitions on both sides provide a rough preview of the lineup for next spring's race. Anti-drilling environmentalists in the affluent beachside community are recruiting Westsiders hostile to growth. Occidental is trying to form a coalition of blacks, Hispanics, and less affluent whites in the San Fernando Valley who reside miles and worlds away from the beach. The issue doesn't divide perfectly along racial lines—Hispanic City Councilwoman Gloria Molina, for example, opposes drilling. But it comes close enough. The political machine allied with Jewish Representatives Howard L. Berman and Henry A. Waxman buttresses the anti-drilling forces, and Occidental expects to rely heavily on Bradley's allies in the black community.

The dispute dates back to 1968, when the city swapped the Palisades site to Occidental for some nearby company land. In 1972 the City Council gave Occidental permission for exploratory drilling, but environmentalists filed a lawsuit. Meanwhile Bradley was elected mayor in 1973 partly because of his opposition to drilling; he even called for a grand jury investigation of the circumstances of the land

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

swap. When the City Council again approved drilling in 1978, Bradley vetoed.

Occidental didn't give up. It hired more law firms, conducted more studies, and rose again through the city's labyrinthine approval process. In January 1985 the City Council gave Occidental another go-ahead. Bradley, to the astonishment of environmentalists, reversed his position and approved the drilling, saying Occidental had met the environmental concerns he raised in his first veto.

Not surprisingly, the anti-drilling group filed another lawsuit and fought Occidental at the state Coastal Commission. Both efforts failed. They also are likely to lose on a bill to repeal the City Council's approval of the drilling. So they are now pinning their hopes on November. Their case is built on protecting the coastline: literally, something of a stretch. The drilling site would not be in the water, or even on the beach, but across seven lanes of highway. Opponents maintain that any mishap would endanger the beach anyway. Besides, they say, allowing production so close to the beach would send the federal government a signal to permit drilling in Santa Monica Bay.

Once the anti-drilling forces announced their initiative, Oxy came back with a ballot proposal of its own. It came through a "citizens' commission" assembled by Michael (Mickey) Kantor, an attorney at the law firm headed by former Democratic National Committee chairman Charles T. Manatt, and a savvy Democratic operative in his own right. Kantor studded the commission's letterhead with familiar black, Hispanic, and labor figures. Occidental's arguments aim straight for the fault lines in Bradley's coalition. Oxy hopes to woo minority and working-class voters by earmarking much of the revenue from the project for additional police officers. It also argues that the anti-drilling initiative is merely an attempt by affluent, elitist Westsiders to avoid contributing their fair share to the community.

It could be a powerful argument. Seventeen other oil fields now operate across L.A., in all sorts of areas—even directly on the beach in Venice. "Not one of these people have opposed drilling anywhere else," said Kantor. "This is a group that is going to give selfishness a bad name."

IF THIS sounds like a strangely populist case for an international oil company to make, perhaps it is because Democratic media consultants David K. Doak and Robert M. Shrum are helping them craft it. Since last summer Doak and Shrum have been advising Occidental on "spin control," as one source put it. Doak and Shrum are the same consultants who helped remake Representative Richard A. Gephardt, the consummate congressional insider, into a prairie populist for the Iowa primary. After that there was perhaps no challenge left but to transmute Occidental's centi-millionaire chairman Armand Hammer into a tribune of the forgotten man. (Hammer was convicted of illegally concealing campaign contributions in the Watergate era. His firm's IBP Inc. meat-packing subsidiary was just hit with the second-largest federal occupational safety fine ever.)

Whoever wins the ballot matters less to the city's future than how the campaign is fought. With both sides planning to spend several million dollars, most local observers are expecting the worst. For Occidental "to fan the flames of racial conflict to pursue their own private interest is just reprehensible," says City Councilman Marvin Braude, who represents the area where the drilling is planned. At the least, this fall's campaign will uncover two dirty secrets of L.A.: the white Westside has significantly different priorities than the minority communities, and race relations aren't as placid as they seem. Sprawl helps to explain Los Angeles's racial quiescence; isolation diffuses tension. But it's still there. The anti-drilling group plans to tap it. "Any part of the city that has animosity toward white liberals is going to be attracted to this," says a Bradley aide.

True enough. But that doesn't necessarily mean that inner-city residents are fond of giant international oil companies either, no matter how enthusiastically their media consultants portray them as champions of the common good. The anti-drilling forces plan to deepen those suspicions with a populist campaign of their own: "What's at issue here," Yaroslavsky said, "is who runs Los Angeles." And whether Los Angeles in the tenor of its politics is on its way to becoming another Chicago or New York.

RONALD BROWNSTEIN

Ronald Brownstein is the West Coast correspondent of the *National Journal*.

THE PRESS

DIRTY 'HARRY'

IN A WORLD where the sexiest stories sometimes come from sources of questionable character and reliability, a journalist's skepticism is the public's first, and often only, line of defense against fantasy. But one journalist's fruitcake is another's gold mine. This may help to explain the strange behavior of the national media concerning recent allegations linking George Bush's office to a giant guns and drugs plot in Central America—revelations that a few journalists have lusted after but most have studiously ignored.

On April 7 ABC's "World News Tonight" disclosed what sounded like an amazing new revelation about the Reagan administration's secret effort to support the Nicaraguan *contras*. According to Richard Threlkeld, ABC had discovered that the administration was operating a massive illegal *contra* supply network three years before Richard Secord, Albert Hakim and Company hatched the "Enterprise" under Ollie North. The scheme sounded like a Lyndon LaRouche reverie. ABC reported that in 1983 the administration began working with Israeli intelligence agents to arrange a massive airlift of Soviet-bloc weapons to Cen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tral America. The same planes that transported guns to the *contras* then hauled loads of Colombian cocaine across the American border.

The implication was that the gunrunners were also drug traffickers, and possibly that drug money was helping to finance the *contras*. The point men, ABC said, were Felix Rodríguez, one of the CIA's most famous ex-agents, and Mike Harare, a former Israeli secret agent who went into private practice as a consultant to Panamanian dictator Manuel Antonio Noriega. To authenticate its account, ABC produced two purported witnesses: José Blandón, the former Panamanian consul who has become Noriega's chief accuser, and "Harry," a mysterious American who claimed to have helped both procure the matériel and deliver it.

Despite these lurid allegations, the ABC disclosures were effectively ignored by other media until the *New Yorker*'s "Talk of the Town" column on April 25 used them to deplore the flaccid state of investigative journalism. The piece commended ABC for its courage in pursuing the story, but chided the network for failing to mention that Rodríguez was a close friend of Don Gregg, George Bush's national security adviser, who had introduced the spook to the vice president. The *New Yorker* speculated that ABC's omission revealed the same journalistic pusillanimity that enabled Ronald Reagan to conduct a Teflon presidency during his first six years in office.

BUT ANOTHER possible explanation is that something about the Bush connection set off the bullshit detectors at ABC's competitors—and, for that matter, at ABC. Indeed, there may well have been less to the story than met the eye. It turns out that "Harry" is a source of doubtful character and reliability. But ironically, the questions over Harry's character only became clear once his identity was unmasked and the rest of the media finally picked up on the story.

The ABC story came to life several weeks after the initial report when Robert Parry, a *Newsweek* scribe who (as an Associated Press reporter) had broken several stories about Ollie's *contra* capers, produced a witness who appeared to validate ABC's tale. Parry reported that Richard Brenneke, an obscure Oregon businessman, had given a Senate subcommittee a secret deposition not only confirming the details of the ABC report, but also accusing Gregg, and therefore Bush's office, of direct involvement in the guns and drugs plot. Brenneke told Parry he had actually flown a load of dope into Texas in mid-1985, and that when he tried to question Gregg about the wisdom of drug smuggling, he was told to shut up and follow orders.

ABC responded to *Newsweek*'s disclosures by bringing its pseudonymous source out of the shadows. "Harry" was none other than Richard Brenneke, and this time he spoke up about Bush's adviser. "I talked to Donald Gregg because I was directed to him," said Brenneke, a nerdy-looking fellow with a wispy beard and glasses who told *Newsweek* that the gun-and-drug runners in Central America hired him as their "Washington contact." Brenneke said Gregg told him: "You are not to worry about or concern yourself with the movement of drugs. That's not your business." Bush's office issued immediate denials. But the drugs and guns story finally was acknowledged by other networks, the wire services, and major newspapers, and within hours the public was perceiving Bush as the Velcro VP.

The problem, which *Newsweek* alluded to and ABC ignored, is that the public record reveals there are serious doubts about Brenneke's credibility. Although drug traffickers and arms merchants aren't known for their adherence to truth and justice, the government sometimes uses them as prosecution witnesses in order to put fellow miscreants behind bars. Brenneke apparently has served as an informant for law enforcement agencies more than once, but even in this hazy world of half-truths there are questions about his usefulness. In a 1985-86 "sting" operation against more than a dozen international arms dealers, Brenneke emerged as a potential key witness linking the dealers with the administration. But curiously, neither the defense nor the prosecution plans to call him as a witness.

MEANWHILE, there are wild discrepancies in the stories Brenneke has told to interviewers. During interviews last year with the *New York Times*, he produced a letter in which the CIA confirmed it had employed him for 13 years. The interviews resulted in a February 1987 story about a huge arms ring called the Demavand project in which Pentagon officials supposedly allowed American businessmen to negotiate with Iran in the hope of obtaining captured Soviet tanks. Brenneke told the *Times* he had worked for the Israeli secret service and for French intelligence as well, although he said nothing about his drug-*contras* connection.

But to reporters from the Portland *Oregonian*, who were not unnaturally intrigued at the possibility that a real-life James Bond had been living in their midst, Brenneke told another tale. He refused to confirm that he had ever even applied for a job at the CIA, pleading a faulty memory. He also said that although he had attempted to arrange several arms deals, none was ever consummated, and that he exaggerated his business deals in letters to the government in order to get official attention.

The *Oregonian* subsequently turned up evidence of a shifty past. Brenneke had been a suspect or informant in at least three federal fraud investigations (although he was never charged). In the 1970s he helped the Securities and Exchange Commission shut down an international investment firm he had once worked for that was involved in financial shenanigans. Finally, the CIA told the *Oregonian*, on the record, that it had never heard of Richard Brenneke.

Of course, such a CIA disclaimer could well prove the opposite of what it says. But equally, just because the CIA says something does not automatically mean it is false. In any case, Brenneke's contradictory stories suggest that at some point he was lying to someone. This surely should raise doubts about his usefulness as a key witness to a major scandal. In the last few weeks Brenneke has also told interviewers that he is agitated about dope because his son is a drug addict. He did not reply to the messages I left with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the International Center for Development Policy, an anti-*contra* think tank in Washington that has taken him under its wing.

ABC and *Newsweek* appear to have been reassured by the fact that Brenneke's allegations were confirmed by Blandón, the former Noriega crony. But Blandón, who does little to hide his animus toward Noriega, has also told sensational stories about the administration and Panama that have been denied by the alleged principals and not corroborated elsewhere.

And journalists are not the only investigators willing to suspend disbelief when it comes to a nasty story about a major political figure in this campaign season. Senator John Kerry, who heads a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee that has been investigating the connection between *contras* and drugs, also has seemed intent on producing blockbusters against the administration—and Bush in particular—however thinly corroborated. On the subject of Brenneke, Kerry's investigators say they think his story about the Israeli-*contra*-drug connection carries more than a grain of truth and are pursuing leads he gave them. But they acknowledge he has credibility problems and appear reluctant just now to put him on the witness stand.

Bush has been full of righteous indignation about the charges, which, as he points out, come from highly dubious sources. He and Marlin Fitzwater, the White House spokesman, went so far as to accuse Brenneke of making allegations against the vice president in order to get the government to drop an arms indictment against him. Unfortunately, they got it wrong: whatever Brenneke's other failings, he is not under indictment for arms smuggling or anything else. The journalists who seized upon the Bush story were certainly credulous, but the vice president can hardly be surprised at the nature of the allegations. These are the same unsavory types that the administration enlisted to run its most sensitive intelligence operations. Now Bush and his White House acolytes must live with the consequences.

MARK HOSENBALL

Mark Hosenball is a Washington reporter for the *Sunday Times* of London.

A dietary revolution.

HOLD THE GUILT

JUST WHEN it seemed that American ingenuity had become obsolete, along comes the invention of fake fat. In two or three years, we are promised, we'll have fat-free potato chips and low-calorie milk shakes. And, like Newton and Leibnitz, who invented calculus independently and simultaneously, two titans of our own age—Procter & Gamble and Monsanto—both have claims to glory.

Procter & Gamble's product is plastic food, a man-made fat from the chemical family called sucrose polyesters. Because the word "polyester" has bad connotations, Procter & Gamble has created a name for the product, "olestra." (It is pronounced with the accent on "less.") Olestra has no cholesterol and no calories. The reason, and this is where the story gets curious, is that olestra is engineered so that the body cannot digest it or break it down in any way. It is left utterly unaffected by its travels, like Anne Tyler's accidental tourist. Best of all, it tastes like the real thing, and it has what the food industry calls good "mouth feel."

Monsanto's NutraSweet Co. (the maker of the sugar substitute aspartame) has followed a different path to the same goal. Unlike olestra, NutraSweet's fake fat, called Simplesse, is natural. Sort of. It is made of proteins from milk or egg whites, heated and mechanically manipulated so that the resulting goop has few calories, no cholesterol, and the feel of fat. (The federal government has also jumped into the fake-food biz. The Department of Agriculture, searching for a better cattle food, came up with a no-calorie flour substitute called fluffy cellulose.)

The news stories so far mostly have focused on science and safety, and they've missed the real point. The Food and Drug Administration does have legitimate health questions to investigate, mainly having to do with reports of tumors in lab rats who scarfed down fake fat. There may also be side effects to worry about. Procter & Gamble says, for example, that it has solved one problem, delicately referred to as "anal seepage," that bedeviled olestra in its early formulations. But the science should be secondary; the true significance of fake fat is sociological. Just as the Pill explicitly divided sex and procreation, fake fat offers taste without nutrition—in short, pure gustatory sensation.

HOW MUCH is that worth? Wall Street analysts, their heads dancing with visions of low-cal sugarplums and hot fudge sundaes, can barely contain themselves. They foresee annual revenues of billions of dollars, sales that dwarf those of sugar substitutes or baldness remedies. Society is about to welcome polyester in its food, and the most enthusiastic welcome will be from those who reject it in their clothes.

That is a peculiar development. Nearly every product in today's supermarket is portrayed as having come straight from the farm. Technology is so unappealing that even factory-made cookies are portrayed as the work of adorable elves. Will the consumers who have been lured by those messages really race off to buy sliced and diced egg whites and indigestible plastic food?

Yup. "The reason is very simple," says Leo Shapiro, a Chicago market researcher. "Everybody loves fat. Even animals go for fat. What do they do if they want to make dog food taste better? Spray fat on. What do they do to make cookies taste better? Spray fat on." Shapiro pauses, draws a breath, and resumes. "What's the difference between choice beef and prime beef? Fat. If you want to take

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a nice, healthy banana and make it a sin, what do you do? Take whipped cream and make it a banana split."

Can technology really bring us french fries without guilt? Is there such a thing as a fat-free lunch? We all have been conditioned to believe that the answer is no. In real life, you don't get rich quick, or flatten your stomach in five minutes a day, or learn French while you sleep. Most of all, as anyone's mother could have told you, you don't get pleasure without paying a price.

Those old ways of thinking won't take us far in a new world where dieters can choose chocolate cake over carrot sticks. Will gluttony still be a deadly sin when every glutton can have the waistline of a high hurdler? Consider the changes wrought by other relatively recent inventions. The air conditioner made the Sunbelt possible. The elevator transformed the city skyline, the copying machine the office, the car the nation's landscape.

Among the first to be swept away in a fake-fat tsunami will be hack writers, whose stores of clichés will be depleted. Pity the poor editorial writer, say, when you can have your cake and eat it too. When you can fool Mother Nature. Status-seekers will be in a muddle too. How to differentiate between lean figures acquired long ago by honest exercise, and new, ersatz sleekness purchased at the supermarket? It is easy to imagine that a store-bought thinness will lack cachet, just as a sunlamp tan is judged not quite the thing. But who will be able to tell?

A similar dilemma arose in centuries past, when ordinary people dared to dress like their "betters." In colonial Massachusetts, Alison Lurie has written, the General Court declared its "utter detestation and dislike, that men or women of mean condition, should take upon them the garb of Gentleman, by wearing Gold or Silver lace . . ." But "detestation and dislike" of the skinny newcomers won't be enough to discourage them. If today's joggers and calorie-counters want to keep ahead of the pack, they'll have to change tack. They'll need a look that takes time and real work. Look for the avant-garde to begin cultivating great paunches and cascading chins.

EDWARD DOLNICK

Edward Dolnick is a writer who lives in Washington.

Crime and the drug laws.

SHOOTING UP

HAMBURGERS AND KETCHUP. Movies and popcorn. Drugs and crime.

Drugs and crime are so thoroughly intertwined in the public mind that to most people a large crime problem seems an inevitable consequence of widespread drug use. But the historical link between the two is more a product of drug laws than of drugs. There are four clear connections between drugs and crime, and three of them would be much diminished if drugs were legalized. This fact doesn't by itself make the case for legalization persuasive, of course, but it deserves careful attention in the emerging debate over whether the prohibition of drugs is worth the trouble.

THE FIRST CONNECTION between drugs and crime—and the only one that would remain strong after legalization—is the commission of violent and other crimes by people under the influence of illicit drugs. It is this connection that most infects the popular imagination. Obviously some drugs do "cause" people to commit crimes by reducing normal inhibitions, lessening the sense of responsibility, and unleashing aggressive and other anti-social tendencies. Cocaine, particularly in the form of "crack," has earned such a reputation in recent years, just as heroin did in the 1960s and 1970s and marijuana did in the years before that.

Crack's reputation may or may not be more deserved than those of marijuana and heroin. Reliable evidence isn't yet available. But no illicit drug is as widely associated with violent behavior as alcohol. According to Justice Department statistics, 54 percent of all jail inmates convicted of violent crimes in 1983 reported having used alcohol just prior to committing the offense. The impact of drug legalization on this drug-crime connection is hard to predict. Much would depend on overall rates of drug abuse and changes in the nature of consumption, both imponderables. It's worth noting, though, that any shift in consumption from alcohol to marijuana would almost certainly reduce violent behavior.

This connection between drugs and anti-social behavior—which is inherent and may or may not be substantial—is often confused with a second link between the two that is definitely substantial and not inherent: many illicit drug users commit crimes such as robbery, burglary, prostitution, and numbers-running to earn enough money to buy drugs. Unlike the millions of alcoholics who support their habits for modest amounts, many cocaine and heroin addicts spend hundreds, maybe even thousands, of dollars a week. If these drugs were significantly cheaper—if either they were legalized or drug laws were not enforced—the number of crimes committed by drug addicts to pay for their habits would drop dramatically. Even if the drugs were taxed heavily to discourage consumption, prices probably would be much lower than they are today.

The third drug-crime link—also a byproduct of drug laws—is the violent, intimidating, and corrupting behavior of the drug traffickers. Illegal markets tend to breed violence, not just because they attract criminally minded people but also because there are no legal institutions for resolving disputes. During Prohibition violent struggles between bootlegging gangs and hijackings of booze-laden trucks were frequent and notorious. Today's equivalents are the booby traps that surround marijuana fields; the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pirates of the Caribbean, who rip off drug-laden vessels en route to the United States; and the machine-gun battles and executions of the more sordid drug mafias—all of which occasionally kill innocent people. Most authorities agree that the dramatic increase in urban murder rates over the past few years is almost entirely due to the rise in drug-dealer killings, mostly of one another.

Perhaps the most unfortunate victims of drug prohibition laws have been the residents of America's ghettos. These laws have proved largely futile in deterring ghetto-dwellers from becoming drug abusers, but they do account for much of what ghetto residents identify as the drug problem. Aggressive, gun-toting drug dealers often upset law-abiding residents far more than do addicts nodding out in doorways. Meanwhile other residents perceive the drug dealers as heroes and successful role models. They're symbols of success to children who see no other options. At the same time the increasingly harsh criminal penalties imposed on adult drug dealers has led drug traffickers to recruit juveniles. Where once children started dealing drugs only after they had been using them for a few years, today the sequence is often reversed. Many children start using drugs only after working for older drug dealers for a while.

The conspicuous failure of law enforcement agencies to deal with the disruptive effect of drug traffickers has demoralized inner-city neighborhoods and police departments alike. Intensive crackdowns in urban neighborhoods, like intensive anti-cockroach efforts in urban dwellings, do little more than chase the menace a short distance away to infect new areas. By contrast, legalization of drugs, like legalization of alcohol in the early 1930s, would drive the drug dealing business off the streets and out of apartment buildings and into government-regulated, tax-paying stores. It also would force many of the gun-toting dealers out of business and convert others into legitimate businessmen. Some, of course, would turn to other types of criminal activities, just as some of the bootleggers did after Prohibition's repeal. Gone, though, would be the unparalleled financial gains that tempt people from all sectors of society into the drug-dealing business.

GONE, TOO, would be the money that draws police into the world of crime. Today police corruption appears to be more pervasive than at any time since Prohibition. In Miami dozens of law enforcement officials have been charged with accepting bribes, ripping off drug dealers, and even dealing drugs themselves. In small towns and rural communities in Georgia, where drug smugglers from the Caribbean and Latin America pass through, dozens of sheriffs have been implicated in corruption. In one New York police precinct, drug-related corruption has generated the city's most far-reaching police scandal since the late 1960s. Nationwide, over 100 cases of drug-related corruption are now prosecuted each year. Every one of the federal law enforcement agencies with significant drug enforcement responsibilities has seen an agent implicated.

It isn't hard to explain the growth of this corruption. The financial temptations are enormous relative to other opportunities, legitimate or illegitimate. Little effort is required. Many police officers are demoralized by the scope of drug traffic, the indifference of many citizens, a frequent lack of appreciation for their efforts, and the seeming futility of it all; even with the regular jailing of drug dealers, there always seem to be more to fill their shoes. Some police also recognize that their real function is not so much to protect victims from predators as to regulate an illicit market that can't be suppressed but that much of society prefers to keep underground. In every respect, the analogy to Prohibition is apt. Repealing drug prohibition laws would dramatically reduce police corruption. By contrast, the measures currently being proposed to deal with the growing problem, including more frequent and aggressive internal inspection, offer little promise and cost money.

THE FINAL LINK between drugs and crime is the tautological connection: producing, selling, buying, and consuming drugs is a crime in and of itself that occurs billions of times each year nationwide. Last year alone, about 30 million Americans violated a drug law, and about 750,000 were arrested, mostly for mere possession, not dealing. In New York City almost half of the felony indictments were on drug charges, and in Washington, D.C., the figure was more than half. Close to 40 percent of inmates in federal prisons are there on drug-dealing charges, and that population is expected to more than double within 15 years.

Clearly, if drugs were legalized, this drug-crime connection—which annually accounts for around $10 billion in criminal justice costs—would be severed. (Selling drugs to children would, of course, continue to be prosecuted.) And the benefits would run deeper than that. We would no longer be labeling as criminals the tens of millions of people who use drugs illicitly, subjecting them to the risk of arrest, and inviting them to associate with drug dealers (who may be criminals in many more senses of the word). The attendant cynicism toward the law in general would diminish, along with the sense of hostility and suspicion that otherwise law-abiding citizens feel toward police. It was costs such as these that strongly influenced many of Prohibition's more conservative opponents. As John D. Rockefeller wrote in explaining why he was withdrawing his support of Prohibition:

> That a vast array of lawbreakers has been recruited and financed on a colossal scale; that many of our best citizens, piqued at what they regarded as an infringement of their private rights, have openly and unabashedly disregarded the 18th Amendment; that as an inevitable result respect for all law has been greatly lessened; that crime has increased to an unprecedented degree—I have slowly and reluctantly come to believe.

ETHAN A. NADELMANN

Ethan A. Nadelmann is an assistant professor in the politics department and Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. A longer version of his argument for legalizing drugs will appear in the summer issue of the *Public Interest*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A pessimistic report from the Soviet Union.

WHY GLASNOST CAN'T WORK

BY DAVID SATTER

Moscow

Under Mikhail Gorbachev the Soviet Union is changing. A lull in political arrests has enabled independent social organizations to proliferate in scores of cities. The regime has legalized private enterprise in the form of "cooperatives," and there are plans to give decision-making power to the heads of factories. Despite these developments, however, there is an odd sensation of events taking place in a time crystal, acted out in an abstract dimension and motivated, like some exotic fertility rite, by a guilty need to propitiate the gods rather than by any real hope of achieving a concrete objective.

The problem is that discussion remains encased in ideology. The participants in the reform battle are free to describe society's problems and even to suggest superficial causes, but they cannot identify their ultimate source in the nature of the communist system, and this lacuna forces them to fall back on wishful thinking. No matter how severely they criticize existing conditions, they must pretend that it is possible to engender economic dynamism while preserving the Soviet totalitarian system. The elliptical nature of conversations, the half-truths and inconsistencies in official publications are, in some ways, more striking now than during the period of "stagnation," when the leadership was content to defend the existing system.

The impetus for reform in the Soviet Union came from the decline of the economy. For many years it could survive under conditions of spectacular wastefulness resulting from total centralization because it drew on unlimited numbers of workers and materials. By the mid-1970s it was faced with an exhaustion of inputs. Even more serious, the West entered a new phase of the scientific revolution that emphasized not production in bulk but access to information and precise technology. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was degrading steadily under the weight of the communist system. Food was rationed outside the major cities. It was the only industrial country in the world where life expectancy was falling (infant mortality is four to five times the rate in the West, and 16 percent of the children now being born have mental or physical debilities). Yet none of this would have been enough to motivate the present Soviet reform effort.

What mattered was that economic inefficiency began to threaten the effectiveness of the Soviet military. The danger was first described in 1985 by Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the former Soviet chief of staff, in a book titled *History Teaches Vigilance*, and is now acknowledged by Soviet military and political leaders. "We should understand clearly," wrote Alexander Bovin in *Izvestia* in July 1987, "that if restructuring does not succeed ... if not socialism but capitalism succeeds in mastering the new wave of the scientific technical revolution, then the balance of forces in the world can change in favor of capitalism."

Two Russian words, *glasnost* (publicity, not openness) and *perestroika* (reconstruction), have become associated with the two aspects of the Soviet reform program. *Glasnost* applies to political reforms—in particular, the lifting of various restrictions on information, speech, and social organization. *Perestroika*, the program of changes in the economic and political mechanism, is less advanced because it bears directly on the structure of power. In response to the military crisis, Gorbachev has called for "revolutionary transformations" in the economy, but so far structural changes have been hesitant. The Party owes its monopoly of power to its concentration of both economic and political control. Any adjustment toward individual initiative weakens the Party's control even as it improves the economy.

For the moment the authorities have concentrated on *glasnost*, which is expected to create an air of change and the impression that finally Soviet society is going to deal with its unacknowledged problems. It is also a way of making citizens aware that more is expected of them. Culture and the press are strikingly more liberal, and the limits on allowable political activity are much wider. It would have posed a risk to the legitimacy of the system had not the regime prepared Soviet citizens by dissociating Gorbachev from past repression in a major rewrite of Soviet ideology. The new, "correct" version, which will soon be taught dutifully in every Soviet school, divides Soviet history into two parts: "genuine socialism" under Lenin until 1924 and now under Gorbachev, and the "distortions of socialism" during the intervening 61-year period. With this ideological preparation, the faults of the system can now be acknowledged and attributed to any of the five past leaders.

In terms of its impact on the population, the most important aspect of *glasnost* has been the change in the press, which in 18 short months has probably published more critical articles than in the entire previous 60 years. It has stunned Soviet public opinion. The exposure of the crimes of the Stalin era goes far beyond Khrushchev. With a few exceptions—such as the Katyn Forest massacre and the fate of Raoul Wallenberg—there seems to be no hesitation

David Satter, former Moscow correspondent of the *Financial Times*, is writing a book about the Soviet Union in the 1970s and '80s.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about publishing the truth of Stalin's period in power. The literary monthly *Novy Mir* published an estimate that ten million peasants died in the forced collectivization of agriculture, and the Soviet weekly *Nedelya* has indicated that 50 million Soviets died as a result of Stalin's policies.

Historical truthfulness ends, however, in the discussion of Lenin. He remains a saint. There is no chance to connect Lenin to one-party dictatorship, the concentration camps, and subordination of justice to police terror. He and Stalin must be depicted as polar opposites to preserve the legitimacy of the system.

There now are relatively few forbidden topics, but the coverage of every subject must avoid any attempt to analyze underlying causes. A good example of what Soviet citizens can now read was a recent story in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* entitled "Zone of Silence," which described how Akhmadjan Adilov, the director of a collective farm in Uzbekistan and a hero of socialist labor, as well as one of the most powerful men in the republic, turned his collective farm into a slave colony with a guarded perimeter, his own private army, palace, courts, and underground prison. Adilov was protected by his ties to the top Party leaders in Uzbekistan, and in the Soviet Union, the organs of law enforcement are always under the Party's control. In the Adilov case, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* could ask how it was possible for Adilov to have committed such crimes with impunity, but was not free to give the obvious response.

Another example of the self-limiting nature of press coverage was a report in *Moscow News* about the attempted hijacking of a Soviet airliner by 11 members of the Ovechkin family, from Irkutsk, which ended with the storming of the plane and the deaths of five hijackers, a stewardess, and five passengers. The hijackers had asked to be flown to Finland, but the pilot landed the plane at an airport near Leningrad, were it was stormed by an anti-terror squad. *Moscow News* asked whether the decision to land the plane on Soviet territory had not been a costly one, but it failed to ask the much more obvious question, which was whether a family like the Ovechkins would have resorted to hijacking if they had been able freely to leave the country.

THE LIBERALIZATION in the press has been accompanied by a dramatic opening in the field of culture. But it still takes place within a Leninist framework. With the exception of the works of Solzhenitsyn and other émigrés, such as Vassily Grossman's novella *Forever Flowing*, which touch directly on Lenin, almost all of the suppressed classics of Soviet literature are now being published, including the works of Platonov, Zamyatin, Pasternak, and Bulgakov. The censorship that weighed so heavily in literature has been lifted. Nonetheless, political writing remains controlled on the same lines as journalism, and so imaginative literature is deprived of its intellectual context. Artistic works are also often the subject of deliberately misleading criticism. Novels and memoirs of the Stalin period are said to indict Stalin, not socialism, and the introduction to excerpts of Orwell's *1984*, which has just been published, explains that the novel is about fascism.

In an effort to inspire citizen activism, the Gorbachev leadership has also granted limited political self-expression. The authorities have released hundreds of political prisoners and, in general, are not making new political arrests. In order to be arrested, it once was enough to write an article and show it to a friend or to criticize the regime in the compartment of a train. The regime has now decided to grant some freedom of expression. Previously the authorities acted quickly to suppress any type of independent organization, no matter how insignificant. Now they appear ready to accept a limited freedom of association. For the moment the only persons who are singled out for persecution are those who undertake independent political action, such as Pairur Arikyan, an Armenian nationalist who played an important role in demonstrations in Armenia, or members of the Democracy and Humanism seminar who are trying to organize an independent political party.

To some extent this tentative political tolerance is useful to the authorities. In the past, any independent group or publication was regarded immediately as a focal point of opposition. Today, when the Gorbachev leadership is anxious to put pressure on uncooperative local authorities to implement its policies, independent organizations have suddenly become useful, especially if they lack political sophistication and can be put to work fighting against local "enemies of *perestroika*."

The diminution of political persecution has changed the atmosphere in Moscow and created the odd situation of a wave that is always just about to break. Every Soviet citizen who has been unfairly denied an apartment or fired from his job can now come to Moscow to seek justice in the reception halls of government organizations. These petitioners—"truth-seekers," as they are called—are arriving in thousands only to find that the press's indignation does not extend to individuals. As in the period of "stagnation," no one is interested in their complaints.

Reflecting the strange spirit of the times, Abulfazfizza Aliskerov, an Azerbaijani woman who said she had been cheated out of her home by local officials, set herself on fire on February 12 in the reception hall of the Supreme Soviet, the fictitious Soviet parliament. "I've been coming here for ten years," she shouted, "for ten years, they refuse to receive me. There is no Soviet power in the Soviet Union!"

THE POLICY of *glasnost*, with its Leninist version of freedom, has had mixed results, inspiring hope, principally among the intellectuals, and fear among the workers, who have little faith that any good can come out of "the latest campaign." But a psychological change of some kind is necessary if the country is not to be thrown into chaos as the leadership begins to move to implement *perestroika*.

Perestroika amounts to an attempt to force Soviet citizens to work harder in a system that is inefficient because it remains under the Party's complete control. It consists of two parts—the organization of independent businesses in the form of cooperatives or private ateliers, and the reorga-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nization of the state sector so that each enterprise will be responsible for making a "profit" on the basis of prices assigned by the state. To a certain extent the two aspects of *perestroika* are expected to be complementary, the private businesses improving the quality of services and the plan for "self-financing" improving the quality of the production of the state. In both cases what is at stake is an attempt to induce Soviet citizens to show economic initiative in a party-controlled economic structure.

THE FIRST ASPECT of the new economic program is the development of an embryonic private sector, which the authorities hope will help to stimulate the state sector. To work in a private business, an individual must be willing to hold a full-time job in the state sector and to work in the business in his spare time. This means that the state is able to squeeze extra work out of each energetic "cooperator" or *individualchik*, and they, in turn, are encouraged to recruit wives and children to fill in for them in the private business. That way they make it possible for the economy to exploit untapped "labor resources."

Despite these conditions, however, Soviet citizens are slowly beginning to form private businesses, because in an economy where the services are uniformly shoddy, the rewards for independent enterprise can be high. There are now about 300,000 people engaged in individual labor activity and an estimated 150,000 people in about 14,000 cooperatives.

The appearance in the Soviet Union of private businesses that have official status and pay taxes does not represent structural change. In the past many of the services involved were provided by the black market, and so the private enterprises are only a means to bring part of the parallel economy back under the control of the state. The main importance of the independent enterprises is encouraging an environment in which citizens are expected to show initiative if they want rewards, with the same principle to be applied on a much larger scale in the state sector in the plan for self-financing, or *khozrachet.*

In fact, the plan for self-financing is the keystone of the entire economic reform and, with it, probably the Gorbachev program as a whole. It gives to the management of Soviet enterprises what they have always lacked: a measure of autonomy. Under the new law on state enterprises, the enterprise has the right to make decisions about the disposition of resources, finding suppliers and disposing of part of its production either directly or through a new wholesale trade network, with prices set by agreement under the supervision of state price formation bodies.

For the moment the reform has had virtually no effect on the economy because the place of plan indicators has been taken by "state orders," making the system even more cumbersome than before. The economic reform is not expected to go into operation fully until the next five-year plan, which begins in 1991. At that time, however, it will be full of ominous possibilities because, although it does not correct for any of the structural defects in the Soviet economy, it offers abundant opportunities to reduce the already thoroughly exploited Soviet worker to a new level of poverty while depriving him of the one thing that made his poverty bearable: the confidence that his pay was assured and he could not be fired from his job.

The most important aspect of the new system from the point of view of the individual worker is that it threatens his wages, because the wage fund will no longer be handed down to the enterprise from above but will depend on the enterprise's own income. This would be reasonable in the context of a free market. It is menacing under Soviet conditions, where the ability of the enterprise to earn an income depends marginally on the enterprise but mainly on the economic conditions created by the state.

For all of Gorbachev's talk of increasing economic independence, there is no indication that he plans to end the factors that account for the inefficiency of Soviet industry, even under conditions of reform. Under the new system, an enterprise's production must fully accord first with the economic plan, second with state orders, and only then with orders from customers. If the share of state orders is significant, as it appears it will be, the new reform will carry within itself the seeds of the Soviet economy's existing irrationality—the omissions of the planning agency, the inefficiency of the supply agency, the interference of the quality control agency, the inflexibility of ministries, and the unreliability of the Soviet railways. This will be all the more true if, as seems likely, there is no change in the system of giving absolute priority to military production, because the organization of the country as a military machine both impoverishes the civilian economy and subjects it to constant disruption.

Under these circumstances, Soviet workers may find that their salaries are subject to sharp reductions because of the enterprise's failure to make a profit, even though that failure was the result of factors completely outside the enterprise's control. Such a situation has already led to strikes and will in the future. They may also find that their security will be destroyed by rapid inflation as enterprises, in order to become "profitable" without any improvement in efficiency, simply raise prices, shifting the cost of economic reform to the consumer.

SIGNIFICANTLY, there are no signs that the authorities are thinking in terms of positive incentives to work harder, except for the vague possibility of higher pay for workers in enterprises that—according to central calculations—make a "profit." This possibility means very little in the Soviet context unless the stores are well stocked and workers who earn rubles have something to buy with them. As matters stand, meat and dairy products are being rationed all over the Soviet Union and the food supply situation is actually getting worse because of cuts in imported meat and grain. Even bread has fallen in quality.

The overwhelming impression is that if "self-financing" is to work at all, it will depend not on positive incentives to work better, but on fear of losing what little the workers already earn—and of unemployment. Soviet factories already have begun experimenting with eliminating posi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions and distributing some of the savings to the other workers. The Soviet Union has always prided itself on giving workers complete job security, but the plans for self-financing call for the closing of inefficient enterprises, and there is talk of eliminating 16 million jobs by the year 2000.

THE SOVIET UNION has entered a transitional period in its history. Faced with an urgent need to inspire initiative, but unwilling to give up power, the authorities have responded with *glasnost* and *perestroika*. They have decided to rewrite to their advantage the long-standing social contract between the Party and the Soviet people according to which the population trades obedience for security and freedom from any obligation to work. As part of *perestroika* the authorities now want Soviet citizens not only to work but also to accept an unprecedented level of insecurity. In return they are willing to give them more *glasnost*—the appearance, though not the substance, of rights.

It is already clear what institutionalized *glasnost* will consist of: exposures of corruptions in the press, but no system of justice for individuals; the right to criticize "in the spirit of the Party," but no public hearing for independent ideas; the right to demonstrate in the interests of the Party, and to vote for factory directors as long as the director remains subordinated to the local Party. Can the authorities persuade Soviet workers to accept economic risks in return for conditional or illusory freedoms? The answer is probably not.

All reports suggest that the workers are convinced that *perestroika* is a sham and that Gorbachev is the latest *baltoon* (blabbermouth) who "promises everything and delivers nothing" and is just trying to exploit them further. They are angry about the anti-alcohol campaign, which forced them to wait in humiliating lines and deprived them of their only escape. They are panic-stricken about the possibility of price increases, since they have barely enough to make ends meet as it is.

It is reasonable to predict that if Gorbachev seeks the funds that he needs for investment from higher prices and lower wages, under conditions in which there is a slackening of centralized control, the result will be a nationwide revolt consisting of cheating, theft, disobedience, and petty sabotage. This would worsen conditions until the central authorities were forced to give in.

The anti-alcohol campaign is a case in miniature of what Gorbachevism is attempting to do on a grander scale. It began almost immediately after Gorbachev took office. It was an attempt to solve a social problem with administrative means. The price of vodka was increased, and the production of vodka cut. At the same time police began picking up anyone who was drunk in public and factory directors were warned not to tolerate any drinking at work.

At first the campaign against alcoholism produced some successes. The consumption of alcohol was reduced, and there was a decline in work-related accidents and in crimes committed while drunk. Gradually, however, the Soviet population reacted by beginning to produce moonshine vodka, and this clandestine production has reached the point where it can no longer be controlled.

Nikolai Shmelev, an economist writing in the monthly *Novy Mir*, estimated that if, in the early 1980s, two-thirds of the income from the sale of alcoholic beverages went to the government and one-third to moonshiners, today those percentages are reversed without any permanent drop in the level of consumption. The loss of revenue to the government, in the meantime, has been made up by printing money.

The core of the problem is that Gorbachev is trying to induce workers to show initiative by giving them rights within a Leninist framework, whereas initiative is a characteristic of freedom and presupposes the existence of genuine human rights. The dilemma of people educated in Soviet society in the face of an attempt to displace them psychologically was expressed by a 33-year-old mother of three in a letter to *Pravda* on January 18. "Like many others," she wrote, "our generation was brought up under socialism and without belief in God. One might say that socialism and its ideals were our God. . . . As a result of the policy of *glasnost* and unrestrained criticism . . . the idea of socialism under which we have lived for 70 years and which determines our aims and the purpose of our existence has, to some extent, been discredited. I cannot speak for everyone, but my own faith has been shaken." If the reform of the economy continues and *glasnost* accompanies it, the faith of many others will be shaken too.

The only way really to introduce truth into an ideological fabric is to reject the fabric and give people rights, or to see the fabric progressively torn until there is no alternative but to dominate people through naked force.

THE SOVIET UNION has shown an interest in Western credits to finance *perestroika*. One figure that has been mentioned is $50 billion. It is not surprising that the Soviets have moderated the tone of their hostile propaganda and are devoting considerable efforts to persuade us to discard the "image of the enemy" when we think of them, an image that might make us reluctant to repeat the error of the 1970s in providing the credits and technology they needed to build up their military potential.

In considering the proposals for "cooperation" and "mutual help," however, we might bear in mind that the Soviet Union has the means to solve its economic crisis independently if the Party is ready to renounce expansion and share power. To have the resources necessary to help awaken the productive capacities of the population, it would be enough to decollectivize agriculture, abandon a few expensive overseas clients, and reduce the size of the Soviet armed forces to a level sufficient for security but not for intimidation.

In the absence of such steps there is no alternative, as Gorbachev has said, to *glasnost* and *perestroika*. But it is the Soviet Union's Leninist framework that these measures seek to perpetuate, and it is this framework that makes the Soviet Union aggressive and militaristic. There is no conceivable reason why the cost of maintaining it should be shared by the West. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Spots Before Our Eyes

Nestor Almendros is, as François Truffaut said, "one of the greatest directors of photography in the world." No one who has seen *Days of Heaven* or *The Story of Adèle H.* could doubt that. It's his very eminence that makes his article "Spots of Art" (TNR, May 23) especially disturbing. I presume to discuss some of the points he raises.

Almendros wants to establish the importance of TV commercials to the film industry as a source of livelihood. But mainly he argues the importance of TV spots to the development of film aesthetics. On the first point, no dispute. I'm surprised only that Almendros says that the financial benefits began to flow "in the last few years." Twenty-four years ago I was taken to a London pub where well-known film people—directors, technicians, actors—gathered to discuss their TV-commercial exploits. In 1967 Dustin Hoffman did a spot for Volkswagen that was broadcast only after *The Graduate* was released.

Long may TV spots flourish to help film people when otherwise unemployed. Still, an admirer begins to murmur when Almendros says: "One may lament the state of feature-length films in many countries, but there is no crisis in the film industry itself." Hurrah for the end of the crisis. (Do all film people agree?) But as a resident of a country where the state of feature films is low, I feel a chill when an Almendros merely concedes this condition, then passes on to the good money news. Is this appropriate weighting from a man associated with some of the best films of the last 20 years?

Almendros thinks so. He cites the fact that Toulouse-Lautrec did ads, as did Maxfield Parrish, and that these ads "appear prominently in collections and museums." After the jar of seeing those two painters linked, it's relevant to understand why their ads are in museums. Surely it's because of their (what a phrase) non-advertising work. Would anyone care otherwise about their ads?

It's not quite accurate that "film advertising, by contrast, has yet to be acknowledged for its aesthetic worth and cultural service." More than one museum in New York has run series of TV commercials, and I've read of others elsewhere. But then, after "aesthetic worth and cultural service," Almendros turns the dial down a little and says: "TV spots . . . whether we like them or not, certainly reflect life, or at least some of its desires." So does the New York State lottery.

Are TV spots "almost always anonymous" because "the creators themselves have misgivings" or because advertising of any kind has almost never borne credits? Beginning in the 1920s, apostles of print advertising have told us that copywriting is the great 20th-century American literary form, but how often has copy been signed? Perhaps "misgivings" may have less to do with TV-spot anonymity than acceptance of the conditions that prevail—to put it crudely, take the money and run.

But Almendros, very much his own man, is proud to have collaborated on TV spots, first, because they gave him chances to work with directors he admires and had not otherwise worked with. He names Claude Chabrol and Martin Scorsese, and certainly working with them must have been fascinating. (For them, too, I'd add, Almendros being who he is.) But what's discomfiting is that he never hints he might have preferred working with them on more substantive material. Worse, he tells us that the Scorsese project was "a classic love scene between two young people; the style of the ad was elegant and quiet, yet pure Scorsese." Let's take Almendros's word for it that the director of *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull* made a spot that was elegant and quiet and yet was purely himself. Odd as the conjunction seems, it's a good deal more odd to see the phrase "classic love scene" conjoined to an ad for Giorgio Armani.

Pressing onward and upward, Almendros insists that "just as in the 'legitimate' cinema, there are TV spots that are noble and TV spots that are not." The "noble" spots are those that use the "soft sell." Is this the criterion in "legitimate cinema"? If not, doesn't the word "noble" look a bit outsize for TV spots? He says that a "soft" spot "may become, in a minimal way, a work of pure cinema." Yes, minimally—in the sense that the communication is done with well-juxtaposed pictures, lovely in themselves. But *"in themselves" is the crux.* Does it no longer matter what the pictures are *for*? Almendros knows better than any of us that pure cinema can be facile cinema. He wrote in his autobiography, *A Man with a Camera* (1980):

> With a modicum of knowledge of composition and narrative, anyone can film something acceptable. This is not true of other art forms. . . . One of the dangers of cinema is precisely its ease. Everything tends to seem prettier through the lens.

Even ads for Armani, particularly when the filmer's knowledge is much more than a modicum.

Almendros gives three interesting examples of techniques he learned from making TV spots. (One of them must have been previously familiar to him—building sets on a scale that makes the

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Mass Is Ended. Nanni Moretti, Italian screenwriter-director-star, has made five features. This is his first to be released here—a warm comedy-drama about a young priest's vocational troubles. (Reviewed 5/30/88)

A Taxing Woman. Literally true—it's about a woman tax inspector in Tokyo. The script wobbles a bit, but it's well acted and very brightly directed. (5/2/88)

White Mischief. Kenya, 1941. Sex, scandal, murder among dissolute British aristos. The high comic style makes it almost Waugh fare. (4/11/88)

Wings of Desire. A rarity—a film that might be more rewarding to read than it is to see. Peter Handke's rich screenplay—about an angel seeking to become mortal in Berlin—seems constrained by Wim Wenders's direction. (5/23/88)

SK

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perspective look deeper than it is. This was common in the theater before film was invented.) But he doesn't—and couldn't—contend that he would never have learned those techniques without TV. His book gives dozens of examples of techniques he learned by working on films of substance.

I was doubly depressed to read his paragraph on the spots for the perfume Obsession. For months, they have seemed to me the most inanely gorgeous commercials on TV, especially irritating because of their gauzy pretense that they are elliptical art, not merchandising. I was not surprised to learn that Almendros had made them—they're well photographed—but I was dismayed to learn that he is especially proud of them. They exemplify precisely the "ease" he warned against eight years ago. Then he refers to this group of spots as a "pocket-size *Rashomon*." When the cinematographer of *The Marquise of O.* uses a phrase like that, the ground seems to slide beneath my feet.

To cap his article—for me, to cap its ironies—he is glad that he was able to use the speed montage developed by Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein, Communists both, "in the service of this most capitalist of interests." (Almendros, whose parents emigrated with him from Spain because of Franco, exiled himself from Cuba because of the usual difficulties with Communists.) What he overlooks is that montage itself is no more Communist than Renoir's *plan-séquence* is capitalist: that his enthusiastic exploitation of artists' ideas to sell merchandise is the enactment of a worst-case scenario—not only in Communist minds—about Western culture.

Almendros's article is presented as an attack on stuffy prejudice against a new art form, but it seems more like an attempt to elevate a marketing process into art so that he can feel easier about working in it. (Between features, I hope.) May he make all the TV money that he wants; but why does he have to lilify the gilt?

How the underclass has been misunderstood.

DEADLY NEIGHBORHOODS

BY CHRISTOPHER JENCKS

THE POOR are climbing back onto the American political agenda. Books about their plight are receiving more attention, foundations are planning new programs to help them, middle-of-the-road legislators are worrying about the rising poverty rate among children, welfare reform is once again in the air. Indeed, today's political mood is in some ways reminiscent of the mood in the early 1960s, just before we launched our ill-fated War on Poverty.

Times have changed in at least one crucial respect, however. Instead of talking about the poor, we now talk about the underclass, which by common consensus includes only the "undeserving" poor: men who have no regular job, women who depend largely on welfare to survive, street criminals, winos, and addicts. The "deserving" poor, notably the elderly and two-parent families in which the man works steadily but cannot earn enough to feed all his children, are definitely not part of the underclass. The popularity of the term thus signals a political shift: instead of blaming poverty on society, as we did in the late 1960s, we are now more inclined to blame poverty on the poor.

Christopher Jencks is professor of sociology and urban affairs at Northwestern University.

Most recent writing on the underclass suggests that it is a new phenomenon. But ethnographic descriptions of the "lower class" in the early 1960s, such as Elliot Liebow's classic *Tally's Corner* or Oscar Lewis's *The Children of Sánchez*, describe people who seem indistinguishable from those who populate recent descriptions of the "underclass." It is the *size* of the American underclass that has changed, not its character. The fact that the underclass now seems to be growing also gives it a symbolic significance that it did not have a generation ago, when most Americans thought the rising tide of prosperity would soon wash it away.

The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy
by William Julius Wilson
(University of Chicago Press, 247 pp., $19.95)

The undeserving poor have always posed a problem for compassionate liberals. When the poor are doing all they can to better themselves, it is easy to argue that they deserve a helping hand. When they are too old, too sick, too deranged, or too retarded to help themselves, it is also easy to argue that compassion requires us to help, since such people are not really to blame for their troubles. But when sane, healthy adults refuse to follow norms of behavior that most of society endorses, the claim that we should help them arouses intense controversy.

Those who favor compassion usually deny that the poor are undeserving. The poor are not poor, they maintain, because they have the wrong values, or because they suffer from what philosophers call "weakness of the will." The poor behave as they do, according to the compassionate, only because they confront different choices from the rest of us—or because they have no choices at all. If they had our choices, they would act as we act. Compassionate liberals have therefore been hostile to those who write about the "underclass," and especially those who see the underclass as having a "deviant" culture that approves (or at least fails to disapprove) of idleness, single parenthood, theft, and violence. This way of characterizing the poor is, they feel, a device for "blaming the victim."

William Julius Wilson is a distinguished sociologist from the University of Chicago, who has been struggling for the past few years to find a way out of this rhetorical corner. As he argues in the opening pages of *The Truly Disadvantaged*:

> The liberal perspective on the ghetto underclass has become less persuasive and convincing in public discourse principally

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because many of those who represent traditional liberal views on social issues have been reluctant to discuss openly, or, in some instances, even to acknowledge, the sharp rise in social pathologies in ghetto communities.

An academic radical, a cultural conservative, and a political pragmatist, Wilson wants liberals to acknowledge that "there is a heterogeneous grouping of inner-city families and individuals whose behavior contrasts sharply with that of mainstream America." He also wants to explain why this is more true today than in the past, and to show how we might reverse the trend.

Wilson confines his analysis to the black underclass in big cities. Since Wilson himself is black, this decision is understandable, but it has important costs. In particular, it is often hard to be sure when the problems he discusses are attributable to class, when they are attributable to race, and when they are attributable to both. This problem is exacerbated by Wilson's emphasis on official statistics that compare all blacks with all whites, rather than comparing "underclass" blacks with more fortunate blacks.

Wilson's major aim is to explain the increases in joblessness and single-parent families in black urban communities over the past generation. He recognizes that many factors are at work, but his basic story goes like this:

- Joblessness has increased among young black men partly because there are fewer unskilled and semi-skilled blue-collar jobs in the big cities where blacks now live. I will call this the "structural unemployment" hypothesis.
- The two-parent black family is disappearing because male joblessness has made marriage less attractive. I will call this the "no marriageable men" hypothesis.
- Both single parenthood and male joblessness have also increased among poor blacks because the black middle class has been moving out of the ghetto. As a result, black inner-city schools have deteriorated, ghetto businesses have closed, the police have fewer allies in their struggle to control crime, job-seekers have fewer employed neighbors to help them find jobs, and the young have fewer good role models. I will call this the "physical isolation" hypothesis.

Each of these hypotheses contains a kernel of truth, but none seems to me altogether convincing unless it is embedded in a larger story about cultural change.

I.

JOBLESSNESS AMONG young black men has increased dramatically since 1970. Official unemployment statistics do not tell this story very well, because they exclude "discouraged workers" who have not looked for work during the previous month. Many writers, including Wilson, therefore prefer to look at the proportion of young men who have no job, regardless of whether they are looking for one. This figure can be equally misleading, however, because it rises whenever school enrollment rises. Joblessness increased among young blacks in the late 1960s, for example, not because jobs were harder to find, but because more blacks were staying in school.

What we ought to measure is the number of men who are neither working nor in school nor in the armed forces. Most of these men are idle in the traditional sense of that term. Using this definition, 8 percent of all non-white men in their early 20s were idle during a typical week between 1965 and 1969, 20 percent were idle in 1975-79, 26 percent in 1980-83, and 21 percent in 1984-85. Rates for 18- and 19-year-olds were roughly similar to those for 20- to 24-year-olds. Rates for older men were lower, but not much lower. Rates for men of all ages show the same increase since 1970. None shows any consistent trend before 1970.

Wilson blames rising black joblessness on the fact that most blacks now live in the central cities of major metropolitan areas, where "information processing" has been replacing manufacturing as the dominant economic activity. As a result, central-city jobs require more schooling than they used to. Wilson argues that this has made it harder for members of the black underclass to find work.

This argument is not new. Manufacturing jobs began moving out of central cities early in the 20th century. In 1968 John Kain published a seminal paper arguing that this trend, combined with housing policies that excluded blacks from most suburbs, contributed significantly to black joblessness. Because this theory seemed so plausible, more than a dozen economists and regional planners have tried to test it over the past 20 years. Almost without exception, they have concluded that Kain's theory was wrong. Blacks turn out to have trouble getting good jobs no matter where they live. Those who live in the suburbs do no better economically than those with comparable education who live in the central city. Those who commute to the suburbs also do no better than those who work in the central city.

The moral of this story is that metropolitan areas constitute a single labor market, not separate urban and suburban labor markets as Kain, Wilson, and many others have assumed. But this does not necessarily mean that Wilson is incorrect when he blames rising black joblessness on structural changes in the economy. It just means that we have to look at changes in the economy as a whole, rather than in central-city economies.

When we look at the economy as a whole, we find that young blacks were not the only group that had more trouble finding work after 1970. Idleness is only about half as common among young whites as among young blacks. But whenever the black rate rises or falls, the white rate for the same age group rises or falls by about the same percentage. This suggests that both rates depend largely on the balance between supply and demand in the labor market as a whole. To see why this balance has changed, a little history is helpful.

Between 1958 and 1960 the overall unemployment rate averaged 6 percent. Most liberals regarded this as evidence of Republican economic incompetence, and during the 1960s the Democrats used monetary and fiscal policy to push down unemployment. By 1968-70 the unemployment rate averaged only 4 percent. This change was especially beneficial to those who have always borne the brunt of unemployment, namely unskilled blacks. Unemployment among black high school dropouts fell from 16 percent to 9 percent.

Inflation began to accelerate in the late 1960s, and by 1973 most economists were convinced that the only way to control it was to let unemployment rise. By 1978-80 we had let unemployment climb back to its 1958-60 level of 6 percent. The big losers were the same people who had benefitted from tight labor markets in the 1960s. Unemployment rose from 5 percent to 11 percent among white high school dropouts, and from 9 percent to 21 percent among black dropouts. Among college graduates, in contrast, unemployment only rose from 1.1 percent to 2.1 percent for whites, and from 1.4 to 4.2 percent for blacks.

Still, inflation persisted. In order to curb it, the Reagan administration

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pushed the economy into the worst recession since the 1930s. Unemployment rose above 10 percent, and inflation receded. Today unemployment is just below 6 percent, and inflation is also fairly low. Most economists feel that pushing unemployment much below 6 percent will mean more inflation, so there is little political pressure to do this.

THIS HISTORY suggests to me that the rise in idleness among young black men is largely attributable to the fact that we have stopped running the economy at full throttle. Slack labor markets have always had catastrophic effects on urban blacks (though the effect was less obvious during the 1950s, because many more blacks still worked in the rural South, where they were underemployed rather than unemployed). If we could get the overall unemployment rate back down to 3 or 4 percent, joblessness among young blacks would drop precipitously.

Consider Massachusetts: by the mid-1980s the Reagan administration's military spending binge had cut unemployment in the Boston area below 3 percent. This boom was led by high-tech industries, and much of it took place in the suburban ring around Boston, where few blacks live. Nonetheless, black unemployment in the Boston area was down to 5.6 percent by 1985. We don't have figures for black youths, but most observers agree that they too made dramatic gains. The trouble is that no one knows how to sustain these conditions nationwide without encouraging another round of inflation.

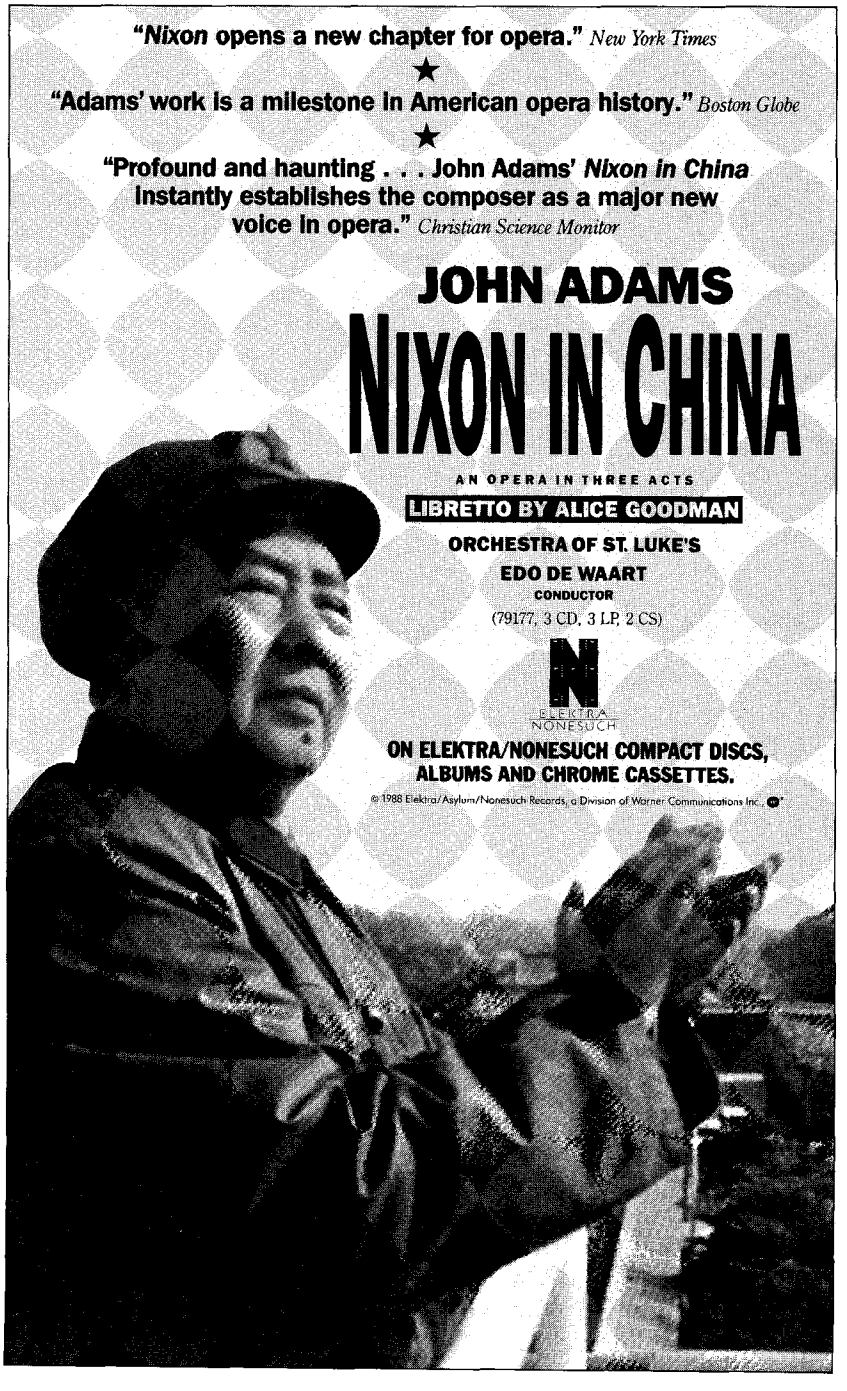
While our inability to maintain a tight labor market deserves most of the blame for increased idleness among young blacks, it is not the only culprit. Demand for unskilled workers has been especially soft.

So far as I know, nobody has tried to measure recent changes in the educational requirements of American jobs. But occupations with above-average *wages* grew about 20 percent faster than those with average or below-average wages between 1973 and 1982. High-wage occupations almost always require more education than low-wage occupations. It seems likely, therefore, that occupations with above-average educational requirements are growing faster than occupations that require little or no formal education.

But while educational requirements seem to be rising, real wages are not. All those new accountants, computer programmers, lawyers, and college professors are supposed to make the economy work more efficiently, but they haven't delivered. Output per worker has hardly changed since 1970. As a result, real annual earnings have stagnated (though hours have fallen slightly and fringe benefits have risen).

The economic situation has been especially bad for the young. Most firms want to maintain a certain balance between experienced workers and inexperienced workers. Because of the baby boom, immigration, and the fact that more young mothers work part time, the number of inexperienced workers has grown much faster than the number of experienced workers since 1970. As a result, employers have bid up experienced workers' pay while letting inexperienced workers' pay lag behind inflation.

Young high school dropouts have suffered the most. Even after correcting for the fact that the consumer price index exaggerated inflation during the 1970s, the purchasing power of 25- to 34-year-old male high school dropouts fell 29 percent between 1970 and 1985. High school graduates of the same age lost only 17 percent, while college graduates lost only 7 percent. Unemployment statistics tell much the same story. Re-


"Nixon opens a new chapter for opera." New York Times
★
"Adams' work is a milestone in American opera history." Boston Globe
★
"Profound and haunting . . . John Adams' Nixon in China instantly establishes the composer as a major new voice in opera." Christian Science Monitor
JOHN ADAMS
NIXON IN CHINA
AN OPERA IN THREE ACTS
LIBRETTO BY ALICE GOODMAN
ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S
EDO DE WAART
CONDUCTOR
(79177, 3 CD, 3 LP, 2 CS)
ELEKTRA NONESUCH
ON ELEKTRA/NONESUCH COMPACT DISCS, ALBUMS AND CHROME CASSETTES.
© 1988 Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch Records, a Division of Warner Communications Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

call that overall unemployment averaged 6 percent both in the late 1950s and the late 1970s. Yet unemployment among high school dropouts was much higher in the late 1970s than in the late 1950s (11 percent versus 7 percent for whites, and 21 percent versus 16 percent for blacks).

The beleaguered position of poorly educated workers appears to reflect the fact that they became more numerous. The increase in educational requirements for jobs after 1970 was nothing new. The same trend had been apparent throughout the 20th century. But from 1920 to 1965, the supply of poorly educated workers also shrank rapidly. Native-born Americans stayed in school longer, and Congress excluded almost all poorly educated foreigners from the American labor market.

All this changed in the mid-1960s. The proportion of young whites completing high school leveled off. Latin Americans with very little formal schooling began entering the country in larger numbers. And more high school students began seeking after-school jobs (perhaps partly because of declining academic requirements). As a result, the supply of young, unskilled workers began to outstrip demand. Their wages lagged, and their chances of being idle rose. As always, young black dropouts were especially vulnerable.

IN TRYING to understand the effects of these changes, it is important to distinguish three groups who are all jobless: those who would take any job they could get, those who only want a "good" job, and those who do not want a job at all. Official statistics do not draw such distinctions, but we can get some help from other sources.

In 1979-80, when the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth asked unemployed 16- to 21-year-olds to name the lowest wage they would accept, roughly half named amounts that exceeded the legal minimum by more than 50 percent. This pattern did not vary by race. When the National Bureau of Economic Research asked unemployed 16- to 24-year-old blacks in the poorest areas of Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia how hard they thought it would be to find a minimum-wage job, 46 percent thought it would be "very easy" and 25 percent thought it would be "somewhat easy." Surveys of this kind suggest that a lot of idleness is voluntary. This does not mean that the men in question "don't want to work." Most do. But many do not want to work so badly that they will take (or keep) a minimum-wage job with no fringe benefits, no job security, and no prospects of promotion.

Minimum-wage jobs are acceptable to many teenagers, who have no family to support and just want pocket money. But no native-born American male can imagine supporting a family on $3.35 an hour. If that is the only "respectable" alternative, he will usually conclude that respectability is beyond his reach and slip into crime, alcohol, heroin, or psychotic delusions.

Not *all* idleness is voluntary. Some young men, especially inexperienced, semiliterate teenagers, cannot find even a minimum-wage job. When the Carter administration created large numbers of minimum-wage summer jobs for teenagers, there were always more applicants than places. Making minimum-wage public jobs available to everyone on a year-round basis would surely reduce idleness substantially, even though it would not eliminate the problem. Equally important, it would alter the moral climate of the country, making it impossible for anyone to argue that they could not find work.

Still, the real problem is to create more jobs that pay "a living wage." Historically, this has meant a wage at least two-thirds of the national average—which would put it at $6 per hour today. With wage inequality growing, jobs of this kind have become harder and harder for the young to find. That means not just more joblessness but more trouble of every sort.

AMERICA'S economic history since 1945 suggests that we need what Marx called a "reserve army of the unemployed." Without it, workers will push up their wages faster than their productivity. Still, we must ask why the pool of idle workers should be so disproportionately black. Such a pattern was easy to understand in 1960, when employers refused to hire blacks for many jobs as a matter of principle, and blacks had far less schooling than whites. But since 1960 we have outlawed formal discrimination, instituted affirmative action, and almost eliminated racial differences in educational attainment among those entering the labor force. This should have altered the old rule that unemployment and idleness are twice as common among blacks as among whites. It hasn't.

In 1970, 38 percent of blacks in their early 20s had not completed high school, compared with 19 percent of whites. By 1985 the figures were 19 percent for blacks and 14 percent for whites. Yet this change had almost no effect on the ratio of black idleness to white idleness. The reason is simple: the "2-to-1 rule" holds even when blacks and whites have the same amount of education.

One partial explanation is that blacks have learned less in school than whites. Blacks at any given educational level score far lower than whites on reading, math, and general information tests. Those employers who are mainly concerned with cognitive skills therefore have good reason to prefer white to black workers. But the available evidence does not suggest that such employers are a majority. Among white males, for example, test performance explains less than one-sixth of the variation in earnings. When I have asked employers why they think this is the case, they have argued that traits like reliability, loyalty, meticulousness, sobriety, and ability to get along with others count for as much as being able to follow complex written instructions, do long division, or remember where Cheyenne is located.

In 1971, when black men between the ages of 25 and 64 were earning about 60 percent of what white men earned, differences in test performance accounted for only two-fifths of that gap. In 1985 black men in this age range were still earning about 60 percent of what white men earned. We do not know whether test performance still accounts for two-fifths of the gap, but there is no obvious reason to suppose that its role has increased. If it hasn't, black men still earn about 25 percent less than white men with the same test scores.

WHY SHOULD employers be willing to pay white men more than they pay blacks with the same amount of schooling and the same test scores? Wilson is surely right that racial discrimination based solely on skin color has declined since 1960. Most employers now pay blacks who can talk, think, and act like whites almost as much as they pay "real" whites. But employers' distaste for ghetto culture does not seem to have declined. Indeed, it may have increased. A generation ago, most employers expected young ghetto blacks to "know their place." Today, employers anticipate that ghetto blacks will be far more assertive. Few employers want un-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

skilled workers who are assertive, regardless of their race. Even fewer want assertive workers from an alien culture they don't understand.

Even when young ghetto blacks manage to get a job, they are not likely to keep it long. Many quit because they take offense at the way their supervisors treat them, or get fired because their employers take offense at the way they behave. If we want to understand racism in the 1980s, we must look at conflicts of this kind.

When blacks assert that racism is endemic in American society, they usually mean that whites assume white culture is superior to black culture. The charge is correct. Despite a certain amount of rhetoric about cultural pluralism, the American melting pot has worked because most immigrants (or their descendants) were eager to adopt established American ways of thinking, acting, and feeling, not because we found ways of enabling "separate but equal" cultures to live together.

For Europeans who came to America because they were dissatisfied with their homeland, assimilation has often been difficult, but it has not for the most part been intrinsically humiliating. European immigrants came with no animus against America, and they had reason to believe that if they learned to act like Americans they would be accepted as such. For blacks, however, the situation was altogether different.

Blacks did not volunteer to become Americans, and they had good reason to doubt that they would be accepted as Americans even if they did learn to mimic them. In order to become fully assimilated into white America, moreover, blacks must to some extent identify with people who have humiliated and oppressed them for 300 years. Under these circumstances, "assimilation" is likely to be extraordinarily difficult.

The persistence of a distinctive black culture in America means that we must ask ourselves whether true pluralism can be made to work here. I doubt that it can. I cannot imagine employers making the kind of effort they would have to make to become truly bicultural. Nor can I imagine many whites concluding that black and white cultures should enjoy true parity. In the end, I think most whites will conclude that their culture is simply better than black culture, and that appeals for pluralism are just liberal eyewash.

Unfortunately, Wilson has very little to say about cultural conflict of this kind. Neither does anyone else. But unless we consider both cultural conflicts and macroeconomic changes together, I do not think we can fully explain the appalling level of joblessness among blacks today.

II.

WILSON'S SECOND major aim in *The Truly Disadvantaged* is to explain why two-parent black families are disappearing. Again, the facts are clear. In 1960, 20 percent of all black children were living in fatherless families. By 1985 the figure was 51 percent. A 1978 Census survey found that only one of seven absent black fathers had made child support payments during the previous year.

The proximate causes of this change are clear. Single motherhood increased partly because fewer black women were marrying, and partly because those who married split up more often. In 1960 about 75 percent of all black children were born to mothers who had a husband living with them. By 1985 the figure was less than 40 percent, and in some big cities it was less than 25 percent. Some of these unwed mothers eventually marry, but since most black marriages

LibertyPress

ORIGINS OF THE COMMON LAW

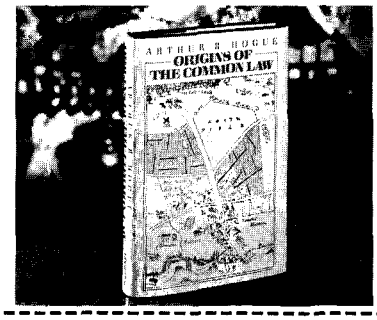
By Arthur R. Hogue

First published in 1966, *Origins of the Common Law* looks at the medieval roots of our legal system during the early formative period of the common law. Between 1154 and 1307, common law experienced a spectacular growth as a legal system enforced in the English Royal Courts. In the form of writs, judicial decisions, treatises, royal ordinances, and parliamentary statutes, the common law emerged into explicit written form and formal procedure.

Hogue concludes, "The rule of law, the development of law by means of judicial precedents, the use of the jury to determine the material facts of a case, and the definition of numerous causes of action — these form the principal and valuable legacy of the medieval law to the modern law."

Not a technical legal treatise, this work should be of interest to the general reader and the specialist alike.

Hardcover $10.00 ISBN 0-86597-053-X
Paperback $ 4.50 ISBN 0-86597-054-8



Please send me: *Origins of the Common Law*

Quan.		Price	Amount
	Hardcover	$10.00	
	Paperback	4.50	
		Subtotal	
		Indiana residents add 5% sales tax	
		Total	

We pay book rate postage. Please allow approximately 4 weeks for delivery. All orders must be prepaid in U.S. dollars.

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order made payable to Liberty Fund, Inc.

☐ Please send me a copy of your latest catalogue.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Mail to: Liberty Fund, Inc.
7440 North Shadeland Avenue, Dept S-130
Indianapolis, IN 46250

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

end in divorce, a black child's chances of growing up in an intact family are extremely low.

Despite two decades of heated ideological controversy, we don't know much about how a father's absence (or a stepfather's presence) affects a child's social or emotional development. We do know, however, that not having a man in the house has catastrophic economic consequences. Two-thirds of all black children in fatherless families are poor, and this figure has not changed since 1970.

MANY CONSERVATIVES blame the decline of the two-parent black family on welfare. This theory seemed quite plausible 15 years ago. Welfare benefits had risen dramatically from 1960 to 1973, recipients had become eligible for both food stamps and free medical care, the rules governing recipients' lives had become much more permissive, and the proportion of single mothers receiving benefits had grown dramatically as a result. It was natural to assume that making welfare more attractive had made single parenthood more attractive too.

Once this suspicion became widespread among legislators, however, they began to restrict eligibility again, allowed benefits to lag behind inflation, imposed new work requirements on many recipients, and began pressuring local welfare departments to kick clients off the rolls if they had not conformed to all the agency's reporting requirements. These changes made welfare less attractive, and the proportion of single mothers on the rolls began to fall.

Still, despite the declining attractions of welfare, single parenthood continued to spread. Since making welfare less attractive did not discourage single parenthood after 1973, it no longer seems likely that raising benefits encouraged it before 1973. Nor do state-to-state comparisons suggest that welfare benefit levels have much impact on family structure. Even after taking into account differences in income, racial mix, and the like, states with high benefits have no more out-of-wedlock births than states with low benefits. Generous benefits do seem to encourage divorce and discourage remarriage, but the effect is quite small.

Since welfare played such a small role in the decline of the two-parent black family, we need another villain. Wilson argues that single parenthood spread among blacks because fewer black men were able to support their families. As a result, fewer black women had an economic incentive to marry.

To estimate a woman's chances of finding a "marriageable" man, Wilson calculates the ratio of men with civilian jobs to all women of the same age and race. This ratio has always been much lower among blacks than among whites, partly because black men are much more likely to die young, partly because the survivors are more likely to be in prison, partly because those on the streets are less likely to have jobs. The dearth of promising husbands surely helps explain why black women have traditionally married less than their white counterparts. The fact that black men are more likely to die, go to prison, or be jobless also helps explain why black women's marriages are less stable than white women's.

BUT WILSON is not trying to explain black-white differences. He is trying to explain changes over time within the black community. Here his story is less convincing. Wilson's calculations seem to show, for example, that black teenage girls have far less chance of finding a suitable husband today than 30 years ago. But this is because Wilson compares the number of teenage girls with the number of employed teenage boys. That is not the right comparison. Teenage boys have never earned enough to support a family, even when they had jobs, and they seldom married even in the 1950s. The fact that fewer black teenage boys have jobs today cannot, therefore, explain why fewer black teenage mothers are married. Black teenage girls never married unless their boyfriend was older than they were. An economic explanation of declining marriage rates must therefore look at changes in the economic situation of older men.

Wilson's data on non-white men between the ages of 25 and 44 show two things. First, the ratio of marriageable men to women hardly changed during the 1950s and 1960s. There were about 70 employed non-white men for every 100 women throughout this period. Wilson's argument cannot, therefore, explain the spread of single parenthood during the 1960s. Second, the ratio of marriageable men to women fell after 1970, but it did not fall much. In 1982 there were still 63 employed non-white men for every 100 women between the ages of 25 and 44. The growing shortage of marriageable black men almost certainly contributed to the declining rate of marriage. But the shortage did not increase nearly enough to account for the huge increase in single parenthood after 1970.

My own calculations show that the marriage rate among black men with steady, well-paid jobs declined almost as much between 1960 and 1980 as the marriage rate among all black men. Marriage must, therefore, have been losing its charms for non-economic reasons as well.

THE STABLE two-parent family is losing ground throughout American society. The trend is the same in Beverly Hills as in Watts. Single parenthood has always been much more common among poor blacks than in any other group, so doubling its frequency for everyone hurts poor black children more than any other group. But the trend is up everywhere, not just in the underclass. This increase has not mirrored trends in the economy in any obvious way. Single parenthood began to spread during the 1960s, when the economy was booming. It spread during the 1970s, when the economy stagnated. It spread in the early 1980s, during the worst economic downturn in a half century. It spread during the mid-1980s in Massachusetts, when black employment was hitting an all-time high.

These observations suggest that we will never be able to understand the spread of single parenthood if we focus on economic and demographic factors alone. We need to think about broader cultural changes as well.

Single parenthood began its rapid spread during the 1960s, when elite attitudes toward sex, marriage, divorce, and parenthood were undergoing a dramatic change. This change was obvious in the mass media, in the law, and in the widely publicized activities of celebrities. In the space of a decade we moved from thinking that society ought to discourage extramarital sex, and especially out-of-wedlock births, to thinking that such efforts were an unwarranted infringement on personal liberty. Instead of feeling morally superior to anyone who had a baby without marrying, the young began to feel morally superior to anyone who disapproved of unwed mothers. Even quite conservative institutions like the public schools changed their line on illegitimacy. Instead of expelling unwed mothers lest they set a bad example for their classmates, school boards began trying to keep unwed mothers in school in order to minimize the cost of the mother's "mistake."

As having babies out of wedlock and getting divorced became more socially

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acceptable, couples' self-interest began to assert itself. Instead of assuming that they "had" to get married if they were expecting a baby, prospective parents began to ask themselves whether they "wanted" to get married. And instead of assuming that they "had to" stay married, unhappy spouses began to wonder if it was "worthwhile" to stay married. For a growing minority, the answer was no. The men often wanted freedom. The women often thought they could do without, or do better than, the lout who made them pregnant. Improved job opportunities for women also encouraged them to look at their potential mates more critically.

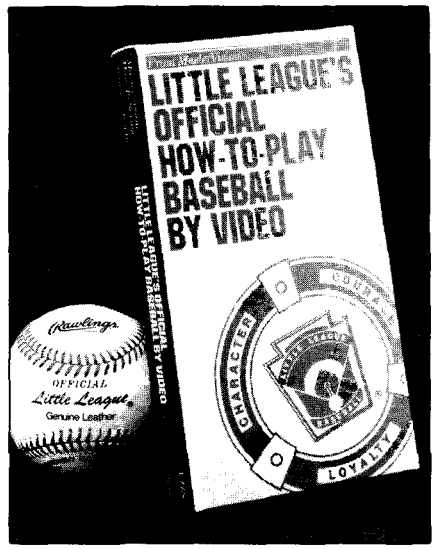
THESE CHANGES in attitudes almost certainly improved the lives of the educated elite. Comparatively few educated women became pregnant accidentally, and a large fraction of those who did had abortions, so few well-educated women became unwed mothers unless they wanted to. Such women's chances of becoming single mothers because of divorce did climb, but most of these women found another husband if they wanted one. Even those who did not remarry were usually able to make a reasonable life for themselves and their children. If their ex-husband had a good job, he could afford sizable child support payments, even if he was maintaining another household. If he stopped making his payments, the mother could still get a job that paid enough to make ends meet.

For less privileged couples, however, the demise of traditional norms about marriage and divorce posed more serious problems. Many of these women reject abortion, and fewer are obsessive about contraception. Now that their boyfriends feel freer to walk out after they conceive a child, these women are more likely to end up as single mothers even when they do not want to. Moreover, couples with neither money nor education have always had more trouble keeping their marriages together than more privileged couples. Once poor couples' relatives began to accept marital breakups as normal, their divorce rate soared. Divorce is far costlier for women with limited schooling and job skills than for upper-middle-class women. Poorly educated ex-husbands can seldom afford to support two households, and they seldom make adequate child support payments. Nor are these women in a strong competitive position if they want to remarry.

Poor children have suffered the most

THE LIFESTYLE RESOURCE™

LITTLE LEAGUE'S OFFICIAL HOW-TO-PLAY BASEBALL BY VIDEO



What sets this tape apart is that kids learn from watching other kids. "To watch a Rose or a Gooden is memorable, but to learn fundamentals kids ought to see those their own age demonstrating the right way to play," says the *Syracuse Herald American*. "...clear, easy-to-understand words and demonstrations," says *People* Magazine. "It's a hit!—4 stars—Excellent" says the *Los Angeles Times*. "The best, the Little League homer," says the *New York Daily News*. Little League's Official How-To-Play Baseball By Video is 70 minutes of easy to understand instruction and network style slow-motion, stop-action and overhead shots. Produced by Little League and MasterVision. In 19 easy to follow chapters, specially trained Little League All Stars teach all of baseball's fundamentals to 8-12 year olds. MasterVision has created the only baseball instructional video especially for kids, basic enough for beginners, yet detailed enough to help even the brightest young stars shine brighter. Full of demonstrations, explanations, and advice valuable for children, coaches and parents. Comes with an official Little League leather covered baseball. **$39.95** #2120.

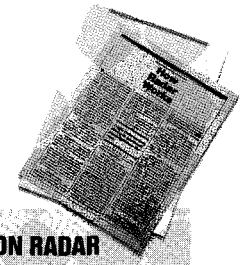
FOR FASTEST SERVICE ON CREDIT CARD ORDERS **800-872-5200** **CALL TOLL-FREE 24 HOURS A DAY**

If you prefer, mail check or credit card number with expiration date and authorized signature. Include $5.95 (for UPS/insurance) for each order along with its item number. Little League's Official How-To-Play Baseball by Video $39.95 #2120. 30-day return privilege.

THE LIFESTYLE RESOURCE™
DEPT. NREFSQ8
921 EASTWIND DRIVE
SUITE 114
WESTERVILLE, OH 43081

How many undeserved radar tickets were issued last year?

a) 1,012,317
b) 649,119
c) 0
d) No one knows



Unfortunately, the correct answer is d) No one knows. Over 10,000,000 tickets were issued last year. By some estimates, up to 30 percent of them were incorrect.

Traffic authorities like to say that radar is as accurate as a yardstick. And that's the problem. You know how two people can get different answers using the same yardstick. Even if only 1 percent of the tickets issued last year were the result of radar errors, that's still 100,000 undeserved tickets.

Our credentials

Our engineers are radar experts. They had to know every detail about traffic radar before they could design ESCORT and PASSPORT, the most respected names in radar detection and warning. *Road & Track* called us, "The industry leader in detector technology."

The Free Report

Now these engineers have released their new report: "How Radar Works." It explains the capability—and the limits—of radar in plain language. And it's free. Just call us toll-free or mail the coupon.

FREE REPORT ON RADAR

YES, I want to know how radar works, and how it makes me vulnerable. Please send your *free* engineering report right away.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Cincinnati Microwave
Department 99968
One Microwave Plaza
Cincinnati, Ohio 45249-9502

TOLL FREE 800-543-1608

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from our newly permissive approach to reproduction. Shotgun weddings and lifetime marriages caused adults a lot of misery, but they ensured that almost every child had a claim on some adult male's earnings. That is no longer the case.

This change is, I think, a byproduct of growing individualism and commitment to personal freedom. Americans have always believed that every couple had a God-given right to conceive children, but until recently we assumed that this right carried with it an obligation to marry, to live together, and to support these children. To enforce this obligation we exerted very strong social pressure on couples to marry if they conceived children, and to stay married thereafter. Today we are rich enough that affluent couples can afford the luxury of supporting two households. As a result, elite support for the two-parent norm has eroded.

Even when almost every "respectable" adult thought unwed parenthood, desertion, and divorce immoral, it was hard to keep families together in poor communities. Now that the mass media, the schools, and even the churches have begun to treat single parenthood as a regrettable but inescapable part of modern life, we can hardly expect the respectable poor to carry on the struggle against illegitimacy and desertion with their old fervor. They still deplore such behavior, but they cannot make it morally taboo. Once the two-parent norm loses its moral sanctity, the selfish considerations that always pulled poor parents apart often become overwhelming.

In making this "cultural" argument, I do not mean to deny the importance of the economic factors that concern Wilson. I only want to suggest that economic factors alone cannot explain the changes that began in the 1960s. It is the conjunction of economic vulnerability and cultural change that has proved disastrous.

III.

WILSON'S MOST IMPORTANT contribution to the underclass debate is probably his emphasis on the role of neighborhoods in shaping the lives of the poor. Neighborhoods have been largely neglected since the mid-1960s, when economists replaced sociologists as the nation's most influential experts on the downtrodden. Now neighborhoods are enjoying something of an intellectual revival, largely because of Wilson's work.

His success in reviving interest in neighborhoods derives largely from a single fact: in 1985 the Census Bureau released data showing that poor urban families were more likely to have poor neighbors in 1980 than in 1970. This increase was partly attributable to a modest increase in urban poverty during the 1970s, but the main cause was increased residential segregation along economic lines. This change was especially marked for blacks. No one knows for sure whether this trend has continued since 1980. But since income inequality has been increasing among both blacks and whites, most observers assume that residential segregation has continued to increase too.

The main reason for the increasing physical isolation of the black poor, Wilson argues, is that middle-income blacks have moved out of the poor areas. As these areas have lost population, their worst housing has been abandoned and often burned. Those who remain behind are mostly poor. As a result, racial segregation has declined somewhat in most metropolitan areas, but economic segregation has increased.

Wilson believes that the departure of the black middle class has made it harder for the poor to escape poverty. This assumption seems reasonable, and such evidence as we have supports it. Black women who live in very poor neighborhoods are more likely to become unwed mothers at an early age than those from similar families who live in more affluent neighborhoods. And black men who grow up in poor areas work somewhat fewer hours per year and earn lower wages as young adults than blacks from similar families who grow up in richer areas.

In some cases, however, affluent neighbors may not have such benign effects on poor youngsters. In a study of Chicago teenagers' criminal behavior, for example, John Johnstone found that poor teenagers with affluent neighbors reported having committed more serious crimes than poor teenagers who lived in poor neighborhoods. This suggests that poor teenagers may feel worse off when they have rich neighbors, and that resentment may lead to crime. Unfortunately, no one has replicated Johnstone's study elsewhere, so we don't know how seriously to take it.

Setting aside crime, it seems fair to assume that when middle-income blacks flee from the ghetto, the poor blacks who remain behind are worse off. But the middle-income blacks who leave are also better off. The net effect on blacks as a group depends, therefore, on whether the cost to the poor outweighs the benefits to the more affluent. Wilson does not discuss this issue.

We don't know whether living in a poor neighborhood has more effect on a poor girl's chances of becoming a single mother than on a middle-income girl's chances. Nor do we know whether the academic costs of poor classmates are greater for poor blacks than for middle-income blacks. Nor do we know how economic (or racial) segregation affects whites at different economic levels. Indeed, the list of what we don't know goes on and on.

The main reason we don't know the answers to such questions is that research of this kind requires many false starts, gradual improvements in measurement and data analysis, and lots of replications. Getting reliable answers takes several decades. Unfortunately, those who pay for such research want quick results. When the first results turn out to be inconclusive, they either shift their attention to another problem or conclude that all social science is a waste of money. (Given the way we organize and fund social science, that is largely true.) Because we know so little about the relative cost of living in the ghetto for different groups, Wilson's argument that increasing economic segregation has hurt blacks as a group remains intriguing, but unproven.

IV.

WILSON BELIEVES that "historic discrimination is more important than contemporary discrimination in understanding the plight of the black underclass." For this argument to be convincing, we need a detailed account of how past discrimination affects blacks' present competitive position. For reasons I have already discussed, I think such an account must deal not just with blacks' economic resources, but with their culture as well.

Why is it, for example, that black first graders in racially mixed schools have more trouble with reading and math than their white classmates? The standard answer is that blacks come from "disadvantaged" backgrounds. But that answer is not sufficiently precise to be useful. We need to know what specific disadvantages make it harder for blacks

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to master reading and arithmetic, and how these disadvantages exert their effect. We know, of course, that black parents typically have less education and less money than white parents. But when we match black and white parents on years of education, occupation, income, and family structure, white children still outperform black children on tests of vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic reasoning, computational skills, and almost all kinds of information. How are we to explain this?

THEORIES ABOUND. Some emphasize differences between black English and white English. Some claim that black parents pay less attention to their children's cognitive development than white parents do. Some say that centuries of racist propaganda have undermined blacks' intellectual self-confidence, and that blacks therefore give up sooner than whites when they cannot understand something.

In the absence of strong evidence, many well-intentioned blacks and whites have chosen to ignore such differences. They assume that blacks don't learn as much as whites because they attend worse schools, or because teachers don't expect them to learn. There is certainly a lot of truth in both claims. But blacks and whites from the same socioeconomic background know different amounts when they *enter* school. Unless we are prepared to blame this on genes, we have to look at the way in which "historic discrimination" has shaped black families and black culture.

Social scientists have never been very good at describing cultural differences. We cannot explain why Jews learn more in school than gentiles, or why most Asian Americans learn more than European Americans, any better than we can explain why whites learn more than blacks. Those who are best at answering such questions write like novelists, not like social scientists, which means that they have trouble persuading anyone who does not agree with them to begin with.

Wilson has relatively little to say about cultural differences between the black underclass and the rest of America. He rejects the idea of a distinctive "culture of poverty," because the phrase has come to imply that the moral values and social norms of the undeserving poor are immutable. Wilson prefers to talk about "ghetto culture," a term he hopes will convey his conviction that the moral values and the social norms of the ghetto are a product of its physical isolation and economic distress.

Such arguments about nomenclature are at bottom political arguments about whether changing the opportunities available to ghetto residents would change their behavior. But that is not quite the right question. Wilson concedes that cultures do not adapt to changing circumstances instantaneously. And most advocates of cultural determinism concede that cultures are not completely immutable. Wilson's quarrel with conservatives who write about the culture of poverty, then, is a quarrel about *how long* it would take for ghetto culture to adapt to new circumstances. Neither side has much evidence on this point.

For many liberals, of course, even Wilson's "structural" approach to ghetto culture will smack of "blaming the victim." This criticism has obvious rhetorical force. The term "victim" implies innocence, and blaming the innocent is obviously wrong. But the oppressed are not just innocent victims. They make choices that help shape their lives, just as everyone else does. If people make these choices on narrowly self-interested grounds, their communities begin to unravel. In poor communities as in rich ones, clergymen, teachers, mothers, and other moral leaders must continually struggle both to limit and to redefine self-interest. Censoriousness and blame are their principle weapons in this struggle: blame for teenage boys who steal from their neighbors, blame for drunken men who beat up their wives, blame for young women who have babies they cannot offer a "decent home," blame for young men who say a four-dollar-an-hour job is not worth the bother, blame for everyone who acts as if society owes them more than they owe society.

The unwritten moral contract between the poor and the rest of society is fragile at best. We usually treat the poor badly, they often treat us badly, and perhaps worst of all, they often treat each other badly. But the solution cannot be to tear up the moral contract, or to deny that the poor are responsible for their behavior. That approach must eventually lead to a Hobbesian war of all against all. The only viable solution is to ask more of both the poor and the larger society.

Wilson's concluding chapter outlines what American society's obligations might be under such a revised social contract. He wants tighter labor markets, more job training, children's allowances, subsidized child care for working mothers, and other programs that would help

KEATS'S HANDKERCHIEF

One day you, also, will gaze into Keats's handkerchief
And find, with him, the evidence, ghastly, glistening,
Of your mortality, the crimson drop of arterial blood
Your tubercular cough has deposited in that cloth.
Someday an immense future will simply disappear.
When that day comes, don't think yourself surprised,
Though you seem young, though your ambition, Caesarean,
Alexandrine, has been left grotesquely unfulfilled—
All men are young, everything remains to do, and hope
Is a companion that should always have died hereafter.
And don't pretend ignorance, spare yourself such deceit,
Though cold and adamantine fingers grip your heart
And your breath labor with the weight of what you know—
Having been studious, having made your soul in the vale
Of human possibilities, it is this you have prepared for:
To recognize and record your perception and its passing.
Stare in the woven square and consider the thing at hand.
If you could sever yourself from its fell significance
It might seem even beautiful, the gleaming bead of blood
As rare as gemstone, a ruby of the finest water,
Bright as Betelgeuse in the glittering cloth of night.
Stare awhile, and then put the handkerchief away;
Take up your brother's hand, who lies in pain,
For poor Tom is dying, too.

GEORGE BRADLEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bring the underclass into mainstream society. All this would surely help. But if moral ideas and norms of behavior have a life of their own, as I have argued, Wilson's package of institutional reforms must be complemented by a self-conscious effort at cultural change, of the kind that Jesse Jackson and others have promoted. There is not much that white liberals can do to reinforce poor urban blacks' sense of obligation to one another, to their unborn children, or to the society from which they must derive their livelihood. But we can at least refrain from undermining the moral rhetoric that black leaders must use if they are to make a dent in such problems. In the last analysis, Wilson's greatest contribution may be his discussion of how liberals' reluctance to blame blacks for anything that is happening in their communities has clouded both black thinking and white thinking about how we can improve those communities.

A Child Of The Century

The New Confessions by William Boyd

(Morrow, 476 pp., $19.95)

William Boyd is a young novelist who has attracted considerable attention in Britain lately. *A Good Man in Africa* (1981), about the mishaps of an overweight and underdutiful minor English diplomat in present-day West Africa, recalls how Evelyn Waugh, Joyce Cary, Anthony Burgess, and Graham Greene depicted their countrymen abroad, as well as the domestic social malice of the early Kingsley Amis; that is to say, the book succeeds in being intelligent and funny without seeming especially new. *An Ice-Cream War* (1982) goes back in time, to the small-scale campaigns in British and German East Africa during World War I. Here colonial comedy verges on underplayed tragic farce—it was a war whose pettiness somehow managed to kill people when they least expected it—in a novel that seems more innovative, though a little out of focus. *Stars and Bars* (1984), which has recently been made into a movie, deals with an English art dealer trying to buy a private collection in the backwoods of the American South; he's beset by rednecks who owe something to Faulkner or Caldwell or more recent practitioners of the Southern Grotesque (or, for that matter, to Burt Reynolds movies). It's all managed quite well for a foreigner, but it's not better than the homegrown competition has been doing.

Expatriation, physical or spiritual, seems to be Boyd's major subject, as it has been, at least on occasion, for so many British novelists since Kipling and Conrad and Forster. Call it the imperial twilight, if you like, the aftermath of an age when the British went to the ends of the earth to conduct the serious business of government, war, commerce, finance, or finding new literary subjects. As the seriousness of that work diminished, they kept going out anyway, if only because there was so little for them to do at home. I don't know why Boyd was born in Ghana (in 1952) and raised in Nigeria, but whatever his parents were doing there, his displaced nativity seems to have encouraged his interest in British defeat or embarrassment abroad.

Boyd's latest novel, *The New Confessions*, is another fiction of expatriation, but it complicates the genre. Longer and more ambitious than its predecessors, it traverses the present century from its beginnings to the 1970s in a first-person narrative by an artist-intellectual of considerable sophistication. The structure is moderately complex, a consecutive life story interrupted by glimpses of the autobiographer writing and pondering implications in his old age; and it puts that life into ironic play against a model or myth, the self-revelatory precedent of Rousseau's *Confessions*.

Boyd's new Rousseau even bears his precursor's first names. John James Todd was born in Edinburgh in 1899, to an emotionally frozen professor of anatomy and a mother who, like Rousseau's, died in giving birth to him. His miserable childhood found few objects for affection: his father's illiterate housekeeper, Oonagh, who first stimulated his sexual imagination; his father's English friend Donald Verulam, a kindly but rather distant bachelor who introduced Todd to his life work, photography; Hamish Malahide, his pimply, unpopular schoolmate whose genius for mathematics touched the only intellectual talent poor Todd possessed—his instinctive, essentially visual sense of numerical pattern. Both sex and math seemed to promise "secrets" that could be learned, ones that would make sense of the world by revealing order in its apparent randomness. But Todd's gift for numbers soon faded into mere proficiency, and he was never to have much talent for love. His search for patterns was to be conducted through an art, or creative obsession, that is literally concerned with seeing order, the art of cinematography.

First, however, the younger Todd, half speculative observer and half fevered voyeur, tries to see through the merely personal surfaces of his pitifully limited youth, with disastrous consequences. Infatuated with his widowed Aunt Faye, and rightly suspecting that she and Verulam are falling in love, he runs away from school in 1916 (at about Rousseau's age when he first fell for Mme de Warens), hoping to "interpose himself" between the lovers. Humiliated by Faye's shocked rejection of his sexual overtures (he exposes himself to her while swimming), and by Verulam's pitying and convincing denial of his cherished fantasy that Verulam is his natural father, Todd flees again, enlisting in a "public school" infantry battalion and finding himself on the Somme just in time for the butchery.

By what seems, in hindsight, the kind of hidden patterning he's looking for, these failures to learn true secrets lead Todd to his career. His experience of trench warfare, whose horrendous absurdity Boyd memorably captures, makes him entirely receptive to Verulam's invitation to serve as a cameraman in the special unit he commands, making (or faking) documentary films of battle to stimulate patriotism on the home front. Here, at last, is Todd's métier. His talent for it leads him beyond the fraudulent jingoism his masters have in mind, and toward finding and composing images whose truthful horror can serve only the purposes of pure, apolitical vision. Boyd finds a metaphor for this liberating disengagement in a culminating episode: near Passchendaele, "shooting" the action from a balloon whose moor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ings are severed by gunfire, Todd drifts beyond the British lines into German-held Belgium, where he's imprisoned (at first for being a spy) and meets the great friend of his life, a cynical, homosexual young German guard named Karl-Heinz Kornfeld. In exchange for a kiss, Kornfeld smuggles him reading material in ten-page wads. The text is, in fact, Rousseau's *Confessions*, which Todd later thinks he immediately understood was "going to change my life."

AFTER THE Armistice, Todd finds a job as a junior cameraman for a London film company that makes trivial comedies, marries not very suitably, and in time writes and directs pictures of his own. He starts to make good money, his children begin to be born, and the artistic compromises he has to make (his first hit is called *Wee MacGregor Wins the Sweepstakes*) seem at least endurable. But his studio goes bankrupt, he can find no other work in England, and in 1925 a vague postcard invitation from Karl-Heinz—who reports that he's "making lots of films and plays," although he is in fact only a movie extra and costume assistant—leads him to Berlin.

Like Rousseau, who struggled to make it as a composer of operas in Paris, Todd at first does miserably in Berlin. But Weimar Germany is the right place for him. He conceives and makes a modern-dress version of Rousseau's *Julie* for Realismus Films Verlag AG, an Armenian-owned studio specializing in "Unsparing Social Comment," and he falls permanently and hopelessly in love with the star of *Julie*, the unresponsive American actress Doon Bogan. The picture, released in 1926, is an international sensation, enriching Realismus and establishing Todd as a world-class director. He begins at once to plan his masterpiece, an enormous three-part film of Rousseau's *Confessions* starring Karl-Heinz as the philosopher and Doon Bogan as Mme de Warens; and he wins a promise from Realismus to finance and produce it.

At this point in Todd's life, the novel is half over, and a certain decline sets in, both in the life and in Boyd's book. Personal and public history begin to work against Todd's ambitions. Though he finishes *The Confessions: Part I* (running time: five hours, 48 minutes), the advent of sound-pictures makes it obsolete even before its release in 1931 to sparse and unresponsive audiences. (Realismus tries to cut its losses, to Todd's horror, by chopping it into a 90-minute feature called *Jean Jacques!*) The Depression and the Nazi ascendency ruin the German film industry, at least for non-Aryans, and Todd's nominal membership in the Communist Party, which he joined almost absent-mindedly to endear himself to the radical Doon, makes continued residence in Germany unadvisable. Paying almost all the money he has to Realismus for the negative of *The Confessions: Part I*, he returns to England in 1934.

THE REST OF *The New Confessions*, though Boyd makes it eventful and entertaining enough to hold readers who like to finish what they've started, seems not to add significantly to what's already been well established. Todd suffers legal disaster in England, losing his wife and his children (in whom he feels little more interest than Rousseau did in his own) and much of his personal reputation. He goes to Hollywood as did other anti-Nazi film people in the '30s, but he can only find work as a low-paid screenwriter and then as a director of low-budget Westerns. He re-encounters Malahide (doing secret war research for the American government), Bogan (running a dude ranch in Arizona), and Karl-Heinz (down and out in postwar Berlin), but in each case nothing much ensues.

Defamed by personal enemies for having fled Britain in its hour of crisis, Todd tries to redeem himself by serving as a war correspondent during the invasion of southern France, where he's wounded by Allied paratroopers (fellow Scots) who think he's a German. He takes the Fifth before the House Un-American Activities Committee and gets himself blacklisted in the industry. He manages to make *The Confessions: Part III* by mixing old footage from *Part I* with scenes of modern California shot on the cheap; but anti-Communist picketing compels its withdrawal (though it later becomes an underground classic in "the university film-club circuit"). Todd unsuccessfully tries to bring his enemies to account and then flees for the last time, to the Spanish island in the Mediterranean where we find him writing his story.

The novel, that is, turns episodic in its latter half, where Boyd seems less concerned with further explorations of how art and life betray each other, and more with making Todd a figure in modern history—a kind of Flashman who keeps on going even after the thematic implications of his role have been made more than evident. Parallels with Rousseau himself still appear—for example, the older Todd, like the older Jean-Jacques, though perhaps with better reason, is sure that he's being persecuted by malignant enemies—but the device now seems rather perfunctory.

It becomes increasingly clear that Todd really is not like Rousseau at all. He may have had genius as a director (lacking the films, we'll never know for sure), but as a writer he lacks Rousseau's irritatingly unanswerable egotism, his

Call for any book

- **Immediate shipment worldwide.**
- **Credit cards or check.**
- **Ask about our overnight gift delivery nationwide.**
- **Free monthly New Title Forecast.**
- **Mail orders welcome.**
- **Open 24 hours every day.**

1-800-255-2665
In CT or Worldwide (203) 966-5470
59 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840

WRITER/EDITOR—NYC
Field: Medical/Legal
Hours: Full Time
Salary: Negotiable with excellent potential and medical benefits.
Call: Karen (212) 799-0032 or write IME, 2211 Broadway, Suite 3B, New York, NY 10024

HOW TO EXECUTE AN AGENCY
by E. Waterhouse Allen
Wicked, informed satire about Bureaucratic Types you should recognize! Distilled from 50 years work in human service agencies. 1st edit., $3.95.
BARK-BACK
P.O. Box 235, Glenshaw, PA 15116.

"THE CENTRAL FACT of the anti-smoking campaign, is that it is less an issue of health than an issue of the *culture* of health. If we can't live forever, we can at least try, so one man's right to a stogie ends at another man's air space. Take that filthy thing into the restroom (and don't leave any ashes on the condom dispenser)."

For a free copy of the current issue of National Review write to Dept. R-57, 150 East 35th Street New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

absolute conviction of the overriding importance of his own states of mind, his power to make us care about him almost against our better judgment. And of course *Emile*, *The Social Contract*, the *Dialogues*, and the rest of the books are always there, should our faith in his genius waver. The Todd we know from his own words is not a genius but a victim. Despite his repeated warnings not to trust his account of himself, we have to trust most of it; and what emerges is a picture of a man who, like most people, lacks some important quality that he wishes he had, and who has indeed been treated shabbily by most of those whose love and respect he's sought.

Here the familiar figure of the expatriate Briton expands into a larger and potentially more poignant figure, that of the homeless person. Though John James Todd keeps leaving places to go somewhere else, it's never clear to him or to us that he belonged anywhere in the first place, that any earthly location can be commensurate with his need to create and to suffer. The aged, defeated Todd at work on his story is the most engaging version of the man Boyd gives us—secretly pleased by the admiration of the young German *ciné*-buffs he pretends to find annoying, erotically stirred by the local grandmother who works for him and whose male relatives beat him up for his signs of interest in her, and convinced (quite wrongly, I take it) that he is "at last . . . in tune with the universe." As a comic hero, the person who at least endures and keeps talking in a world that makes no sense in itself, Todd is appealing. Still, I don't feel sure that comedy is what the novel—funny though it often is—mainly has in mind.

THE NEW CONFESSIONS shows Boyd, like most of the good British novelists of our century (Lawrence and Woolf are exceptions that come to mind), to be primarily interested in "telling a story," following characters and their fates through consecutive narrative scenes that aim to represent "life" as most of us know it. Boyd may have a Sternian kind of interest in tracing the associational grooves Todd's mind runs in, but I doubt that they're peculiar enough to distract many readers from the story as such. Boyd seems to share the national suspicion of "writing" as the French, the Irish, the North and South Americans, and various other foreign and colonial breeds have been doing it—that is, putting unseemly pressure on language and form to see what significances they may have been keeping from us all this while. Modern British fiction is frugally determined to do the job only with the means that lie readily to hand, and of course there's something admirable, if also limiting, about this restraint.

There's also something readable about it, and I would expect Boyd to become popular with intelligent general readers in America, as in varying degrees have writers like Waugh, Powell, Greene, Burgess, Amis, Murdoch, and Spark, not to mention ones like John Le Carré, Peter Dickinson, and Ruth Rendell, whose serious gifts may be obscured for some by their practice of "unserious" fictional genres. Boyd isn't yet quite in this league, and *The New Confessions* has its problems of scale and focus. But it's a novel that can be read with pleasure for its story, and also one that grows in the mind as you think about it afterward, the most ambitious and the best work this interesting writer in his mid-30s has yet produced.

THOMAS R. EDWARDS

Thomas R. Edwards teaches at Rutgers and is an editor of *Raritan*.

TRIAL AND TERROR

The Stalker Affair
by John Stalker

(Viking, 288 pp., $19.95)

On June 27 in Gibraltar the British government will convene an official inquest into the deaths there on March 6 of two men and a woman. According to the Provisional Irish Republican Army, the three constituted "an active service unit," which is Provo lingo for a bomb squad. Their nearby car was loaded with explosives, which further suggests that this mission to the Rock would soon have led to an incendiary expression of opposition to London's policy in Northern Ireland. The murders of three off-duty British servicemen in the Netherlands on May 1, and the discovery of a car bomb on a British army base in Germany two days later, would seem to confirm that the Provisional IRA has embarked on a campaign against Her Majesty's installations on the Continent. All the better, then, that on March 6 the bombers were thwarted before they could do their deadly deed.

Or is it? The inquest is to be conducted because the three Irish commandos were unarmed at the time of their deaths. Witnesses have said on British television that one of the men and the woman were shot on a sidewalk as they raised their hands in surrender to British soldiers, and that the other was shot in the back as he ran away. A trooper went up to the second man as he lay wounded in the street, according to one bystander, stood with a foot on his chest, and fired at least twice more into his body.

Cold-blooded as this encounter apparently was, it is conceivable that the incident was no more than an unremarkable case of overreaction by nervous young men on the front lines of the worldwide struggle against terrorism, quite properly afraid for their own lives. (After all, 264 soldiers and policemen have been killed in action related to Northern Ireland since 1980.) Conceivable, sure. But is it credible? There's reason to suspect that more may be involved. Certainly it is becoming popular in the world today to respond to terrorists with a taste of their own medicine.

The PLO military strategist called Abu Jihad was assassinated in Tunis in April in an attack apparently authorized by the Israeli government. In a less celebrated case a few days later, an Armenian terrorist leader credited with numerous bombings throughout Europe, known professionally as Hagop Hagopian, was shot as he left his home in Athens one morning. The Turkish government has not been accused of engineering that killing—except by the columnist Jack Anderson—but officials in Ankara are no doubt relieved at Hagopian's departure from the scene. The South African government, on the other hand, is widely held responsible for assassinations abroad of senior officials and associates of the African National Con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"INVALUABLE"

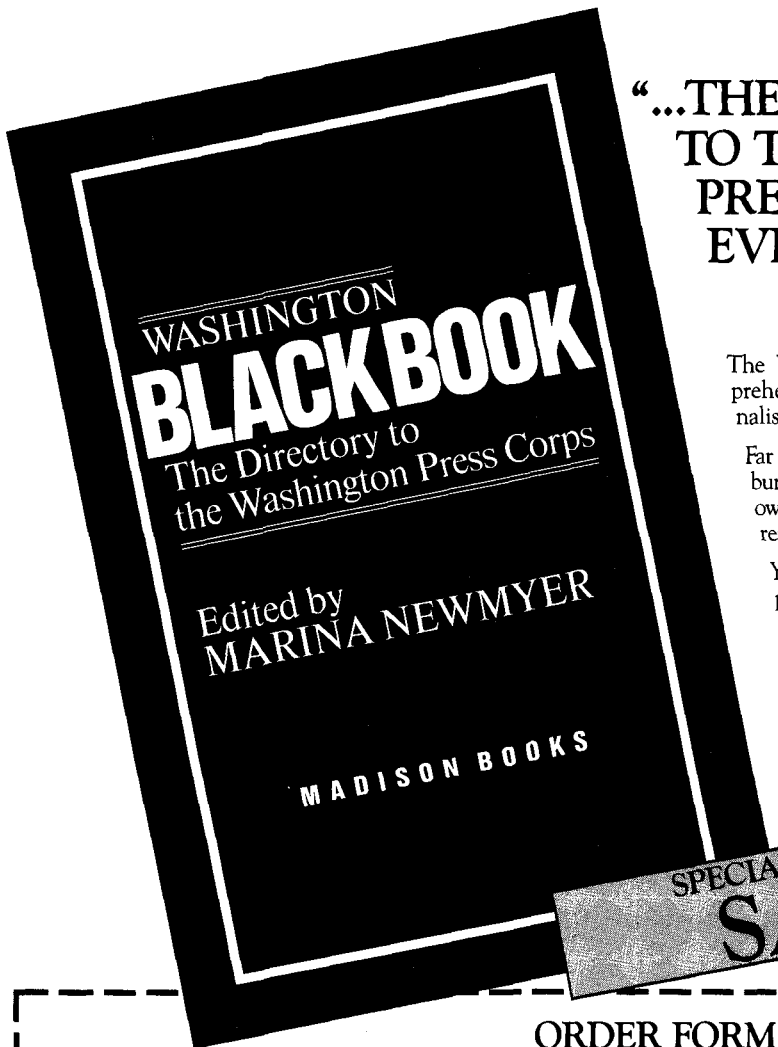
Howard Banks,
Washington Bureau Chief, Forbes

"DEFINITIVE"

John Limpert,
Editor, The Washingtonian

"INDISPENSABLE"

Jonathan Jessar,
Executive V.P., Burson-Marsteller, Inc.



"...THE SINGLE BEST GUIDE TO THE WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS EVER PUBLISHED"

Victor Kamber,
The Kamber Group, Washington, D.C.

The **Washington Black Book** provides the most comprehensive, practically organized information on journalists in Washington available today.

Far more than just a "Who's who", it tells you how the bureaus work, how they interpret their mandate, who owns the publications and the specialized "beats" of their reporters.

You'll find unique "Black Book" pointers on how to place stories with specific publications, exactly to *whom* to address press releases, and whom to query about story ideas.

Updated annually, the Washington Black Book is the *only* source you'll need to have the Washington Press Corp at your fingertips. Order now!

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER:
SAVE 10%!

ORDER FORM

TNR

MADISON BOOKS, INC.
4720 Boston Way
Lanham, Maryland 20706
(301) 459-5308

$84.95 Paperback $_____
$2.50 each Postage and Handling $_____
Maryland residents add 5% sales tax $_____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED $_____

ALL ORDERS MUST BE PREPAID. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO MADISON BOOKS.

Payment enclosed
Visa # _____ Exp. Date _____
MasterCard # _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____ Date _____

Please ship to:
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gress—most recently Dulcie September, who was shot in Paris at the end of March. The *Sunday Star* of Johannesburg reported on April 10 that Pretoria's traveling hit men, known as "Z-Squads Incorporated," have killed at least eight ANC members since early 1987 and staged the April car bombing in Maputo that mutilated but did not kill Albie Sachs.

THERE ARE two wrong responses to terrorism. One, favored at times by the Greeks, the French, and numerous Arab governments, is to acquiesce—to avert one's official eyes, even to make deals, and to hope that too many of one's own nationals and national interests are not caught in the cross fire. The second is to be provoked by terrorist outrages into imprudent and unlawful reprisals. Once that happens, as authoritarian regimes throughout this century have demonstrated, the state can degenerate to the point where it is merely the largest and best equipped of several gangs of guys with guns. A summary execution is a summary execution, whether or not the executioner wears a uniform. Not all governments that apply a heavy hand to terrorists are equally or always unlawful, of course; but the British must now consider where along the continuum they want their country's reputation to rest.

The current official view seems inconsistent at best. British Defense Minister George Younger condemned the May 1 killings of his three servicemen in the Netherlands (according to the *New York Times*) by noting that the victims were unarmed, "just totally innocent people, murdered outside the law." Regarding the three Irish people killed March 6, by others among his servicemen, the minister's views are less clear. While not innocents, these three were nevertheless also unarmed and may well have been "murdered outside the law." Meanwhile Margaret Thatcher's representative in the U.N. Security Council, Sir Crispin Tickell, expressed immense outrage at the death of Abu Jihad, calling it "a senseless act of terrorism," implying that Abu Jihad's own widely reported forays into the world of terror did not justify response in kind by injured nations. Is Sir Crispin a hypocrite, as Richard Cohen has persuasively suggested in the *Washington Post*? And what of his country?

The Stalker Affair suggests that the British may be committing what could be termed the Argentine mistake: permitting their security forces to pass final judgment on terrorists. Gibraltar, it turns out, was not the first time something of the kind occurred.

This is the autobiographical account of a senior English police officer who spent two years investigating charges that the Royal Ulster Constabulary had made it a practice, when confronting people they believed to be IRA commandos, to shoot first and ask questions later. The drawbacks of such a habit are obvious. John Stalker, then deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, eventually concluded, as he relates in this book, that indeed there was "a police inclination, if not a policy, to shoot suspects dead without warning rather than to arrest them." His official report on the matter, he writes here, "did not merely threaten the stability and the reputation of the RUC, [it] raised disturbing questions about the effectiveness of the political controls and supervision exercised over it."

IN A five-week period in late 1982, in three separate incidents, six Catholic men were shot dead in Northern Ireland by members of an elite anti-terrorist squad of the RUC. All of the dead were said by authorities to have been involved at the time in terrorist activities on behalf of the Provisional IRA, and moreover to have initiated the incidents that led to their deaths. Routine inquiries by other members of the same provincial police force, however, led to trials for several policemen on murder charges. None was convicted of any offense. At one trial, the judge not only acquitted the policemen charged with murder but went on to praise them for their "courage and determination" in sending the three men they had shot "to the final court of justice." Public outcry at this, and testimony by policemen that they had been instructed by superiors to lie about details of the shootings, led to the appointment of Stalker to conduct an independent inquiry.

As a deputy chief constable at age 44, John Stalker was among the fastest-rising stars in the British police system. Three years later he had been relieved of his duties and was ready to tell this tale, which has been a best seller in Britain and Ireland since its publication there earlier in the year. Small wonder. *The Stalker Affair* is a story of murder, mendacity, bureaucratic evasion, moral bankruptcy, and political cowardice—likely to be turned into a television movie and soon forgotten. Now Gibraltar and the inquest have underscored the significance of Stalker's account, which indirectly raises questions about London's entire approach to terrorism.

WHAT HAPPENED in November and December 1982 is now fairly clear. An informant told the RUC anti-terrorist squad of the location, in a farmer's shed, of an IRA arms depot, which was then dutifully staked out. During the surveillance operation, the IRA somehow retrieved the explosives (RUC "ineptitude," says Stalker) and used them to kill three members of an RUC patrol lured to an ambush by a false report of a bank robbery. An informant then gave the RUC the names of four men reportedly involved in that operation. Two weeks later, three of them were shot dead by the same RUC squad—ambushed, as well, Stalker eventually concluded. The other man named was wounded by the special unit in an encounter at the shed in which a 17-year-old with no known terrorist connections was killed. Stalker found that in two of the three incidents false cover stories had been concocted in advance and readied for distribution to the press. In the case of the teenager's unplanned death, however, a file outlining his supposed IRA links was manufactured only after his death.

The most incriminating piece of evidence may have been a secret tape recording of the events that took place in the shed at the time the young man died, which Stalker learned (from his own informant) had been made by the intelligence agency, MI5. The existence of the tape, let alone its contents, had not previously been disclosed to police or prosecutors. Stalker himself never did get to hear it. For the full two years he was on the case, he got the royal runaround at the highest levels of the security/intelligence community and the RUC, and he was still trying to obtain access to the tape in May 1986, when he was yanked off the case. Meantime, writes Stalker, he had in September 1985 submitted to Sir John Hermon, the chief constable of the RUC,

> a report that recommended the prosecutions of 11 of his police officers, ranging in rank from constable to chief superintendent, for a variety of criminal offenses including conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and perjury. In that report I also asked for access to a secret MI5 tape recording that I believe would have supported further charges against other police officers of perjury and possibly murder and attempted murder.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hermon sat on that report for five months before forwarding it to the public prosecutor, just a few weeks before Stalker was suspended from his position as deputy chief constable in Manchester and taken off the RUC investigation. He was accused, vaguely and anonymously, of "improprieties"—contacts with shady characters, excessive use of the company car off duty, perhaps even accepting a gratuity from one of the shady characters.

Stalker presents a fairly good case that the charges were concocted solely to harass him and undermine the RUC investigation, and that may well be true. (One of his "criminal" associations turned out to be with a perfectly respectable citizen, who had been detained by the police as a ten-year-old in 1944 for stealing two pounds of potatoes during a wartime blackout.) Though he was eventually restored to his Manchester position, Stalker was kept away from the RUC investigation. It was completed by another senior English policeman in April 1987, after which nothing more was heard for almost another year. Since the start of this year, concern that provincial authorities in Northern Ireland were engaged in an effort to suppress the Stalker report has grown into alarm that the highest levels of the British government have joined in the cover-up.

On January 25, 1988, Attorney General Patrick Mayhew told the House of Commons that evidence of wrongdoing by uniformed members of the RUC, and of conspiracy to obstruct justice, had indeed been uncovered by Stalker and his successor. However, the findings would remain secret, and for reasons "concerning the public interest and in particular considerations of national security . . . it would not be proper to initiate any criminal proceedings." Clearly something is not proper in all this, though precisely what is wrong seems still to escape members of the Cabinet. And others who should know better, as well.

STALKER HIMSELF fails to appreciate the larger implications of his story. He writes in the introduction that his account covers "a unique episode in the history of the modern police force. I doubt we shall ever see anything quite like it again." Yet already there has been the encounter at Gibraltar, and more. In February a man regarded by the British as an IRA sympathizer (but not known to have committed any crime) was shot and killed as he strolled through a British army checkpoint at Aughnacloy along the border with the Republic of Ireland. Officials said it was an accident, and maybe it was. Though charges of "unlawful killing" have been brought against one soldier, it is worth noting that only one British soldier has ever been convicted of murder while on duty in Northern Ireland. A private named Ian Thain was convicted in 1983 of having murdered an unarmed man and sentenced to life imprisonment. In February, however, it was revealed that Thain not only had been quietly released from jail last summer, but was returned to his army unit in good standing.

It is unfortunate that Stalker does not develop the larger story of Britain's mishandling of Northern Ireland. He notes in passing, for instance, that the anti-terrorist units of the RUC are trained by the army's Special Air Service, the elite corps that was involved in the Gibraltar incident. He does not explain that the SAS units were phased out of operational responsibility for anti-terrorist strategy in Ulster in the late 1970s, in large part because they had become politically controversial. Why? In the space of a few months in 1978, seven IRA suspects and three apparently innocent civilians were shot dead by the SAS in circumstances that remain, well, disputed.

Thatcher and her Cabinet seem content simply to denounce news reports about these incidents. She complained in May, for instance, that a BBC broadcast on the Gibraltar incident jeopardized "the rule of law," suggesting that even to raise questions about the RUC's conduct is destabilizing. But it is the conduct itself that is helping make Northern Ireland more violent and ungovernable. In a 1985 Anglo-Irish treaty, the U.K. undertook to work with the government of Ireland to improve the administration of justice in the troubled province. Yet Thatcher continues to give short shrift to Dublin's very real concern that British policy is making Ulster even more unstable, by making heroes and martyrs of the Provisional IRA, and she is alienating the only genuinely useful partner ever likely to be of help in Northern Ireland. In a March 1 address to the Irish Parliament, Prime Minister Charles Haughey summarized his frustration:

> It is regrettable to have to say it but it must be said that a number of events and circumstances, the allegations of a "shoot-to-kill" policy investigated by Mr. Stalker, the early release of Private Thain, and the shooting at Aughnacloy, have combined to create the impression that the security forces are above the law. Any such impression among the public in Northern Ireland must have disastrous consequences on the community and impinge on every aspect of British policy for the administration of justice in Northern Ireland.

It is not yet too late. The handling of the June inquest will reveal whether the British have learned anything from the Stalker affair.

THOMAS O. MELIA

Thomas O. Melia is contributing editor of the *Boston Irish News*.

THE LIBERAL RETREAT

White Boy Running by Christopher Hope

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 273 pp., $17.95)

In 1987 an election was held in South Africa, called by President P. W. Botha to win from an all-white electorate an endorsement for his program of gradual—that is to say, snail's pace—reform of apartheid. It was an election widely expected to be won by Botha's National Party, which has won every election since 1948. It was fought without flair and almost without issues, unless the finer points of the dogmatics of apartheid can be called issues. It was duly won by the National Party. The only surprise, a mild surprise, was that the far right Conservative Party emerged as the second strongest force, eclipsing the liberal Progressive Federal Party, which suffered massive defections from its ethnic base among English-speaking whites.

One of the few journalists from abroad covering this lackluster and eminently forgettable affair was Christopher Hope.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

White Boy Running is the story of the election as Hope saw it, interwoven with the story of his childhood in South Africa. Partly reportage and political analysis, partly autobiography, partly satire, it is in essence a diagnosis of the condition of white South Africa today. Its conclusion is pessimistic, not to say dark.

Though Hope has lived since 1975 in England, where he has established himself as a novelist and a critic, he does not call himself an Englishman. On the other hand, he does not call himself a South African, even an ex-South African. For his thesis is that "South Africa" is a fiction, that there is no such thing as a South African nation, only "a conglomerate of antagonistic groups." Part of the trauma of his coming of age in South Africa, he records, was realizing that there was no place in this Afrikaner-Calvinist homeland for an English-speaking Catholic of mildly anti-social tendencies who hated, above all, the "stultifying, lethally boring business of having to belong to a group in the first place." "The sense of exile we felt within our own country is something which has never left me. We were a generation that went into exile before we left home."

HOPE LEFT South Africa, but he did not cut his ties with it. He couldn't, he says, because "the place is a fever, an infection, a lingering childhood disease I simply cannot get over." Hope's fictions—his novels *A Separate Development*, *Kruger's Alp*, and *The Hottentot Room*, and his stories in *Private Parts*—can be read as attempts to cure himself of the disease, to exorcise the demon of South Africa. "Since the nightfall of 1948 we have not been living in a country, but in someone else's dream," he writes. To find a way out of the stifling, obsessional dream (or nightmare) imposed on him in his childhood, he has undertaken the imaginative project of *outwriting* a society that, as it lives out its fantasies, ventures deeper and deeper into a theater of cruelty, enacting a tangled, horrifying, dark comedy.

Hope's project begins by deciphering South Africa as a text, a pathological text riddled with "dreams, wishes, metaphors, necromancy, illusion." (To his list one might add: lies.) *White Boy Running* contains specimens of this textual critique: of the "vulgar triumphalism" of South Africa's national monuments, for instance, and of the deadening Newspeak of Botha's "reformed" apartheid. But this is, by and large, a book of "straight" criticism, rather than one of the wilder satirical counterblasts through which Hope in his fiction wages war on the big lie of South Africa. It is straight political commentary, straight reportage, though with an emphasis on the aesthetic monstrosity of the system that distinguishes Hope's account from such other recent reports as Joseph Lelyveld's *Move Your Shadow* and Vincent Crapanzano's *Waiting*.

WHAT HOPE detests most keenly about the South African sociopolitical system is its deadness, its heaviness, its stupidity. The only National Party leader for whom he expresses a guarded respect is Hendrik Verwoerd, ideologue-in-chief of apartheid, who was assassinated in 1966. Verwoerd's vision had a "chilly grandeur," he writes. "I cannot help feeling that there has been rather a falling-off since then." Present-day apartheid he finds "an opportunist, patchwork affair [in which] the fraudulence of the scheme is always threatening to overwhelm the philosophy." Covering the election, he dutifully attends a full range of white political rallies, but he is impressed by only one of the speakers: Eugene Terre' Blanche, führer of the ultraright Afrikaner Resistance Movement, "a dangerous man" of "magnetic power." As for the rest, they strike him as mere politicians.

I do not wish to imply that Hope replaces a moral or political criticism of apartheid with an aesthetic criticism. Moral outrage is certainly present, beneath the surface. But, as he makes clear in his story of a childhood and youth spent in a land of dreary moral orthodoxy and rigid ethnic separation, the attainment of freedom meant to him, in the first instance, escaping from the enemy's dream, finding ways of living in the interstices of the system, staying on the run (hence the title of his book). To a man of words, it also meant fostering the magical powers of jeering, deriding, laughing (hence Hope's other books, as well as parts of this one).

As a political commentator Hope is deft and amusing, and knows his way around. But as with certain other South African writers (one thinks particularly of Breyten Breytenbach), the world of power and intrigue is not one in which he is naturally at home. Like most literary people, he tends to overvalue the symbolic. He has little to say about black life or black politics, though watching a student protest in Johannesburg, he does note the "terrifying anger" of black students: "What police and students really want ... eagerly, horribly, is a real showdown. They want to start shooting, they are full of hatred and wish to kill each other." He visits Soweto to give a reading from his work. The audience stops him in midflight and makes him strip away, layer by layer, the ironies, nuances, ambiguities lovingly crafted into his poem. "Not the usual literary evening," he comments; but then, he reminds himself, "this is the front line."

THE SUBJECT of Hope's book, the thread that holds it (sometimes rather tenuously) together, is the 1987 election. "This election has a peculiar fascination," he writes at the beginning. "Undoubtedly something is going to die ... though what it is ... remains to be seen." By the time the last vote is counted, it is clear what has died: liberalism. Middle-class English-speaking whites try to talk calmly about the results but "suddenly get tears in their eyes. There has never been anything like this, a defeat so complete."

Liberalism in South Africa seemed once to have a firm base in the middle class, and powerful spokesmen among business leaders, churchmen, academics. Why should it have withered as a political force, leaving the stage to the parties of the right? Many reasons can be proposed: the evasiveness of liberal politicians in addressing the fears (real fears, however fantastical their origins) of white voters; internal squabbling; the failure to find a counter to sustained attacks in the state-controlled media. And not least important was the evident bewilderment and disarray (delightedly capitalized on by the right) in the face of pressure from the revolutionary left, in the run-up to the election, to make the liberal position clear: for or against revolutionary violence, for or against the People.

Hope's most scornful attacks are reserved for liberals "out of sympathy with the government, yet out of touch with Black aspirations, caught somewhere in the middle, not waving but drowning, outvoted, outnumbered, outgunned, and, worst of all, outmoded," prevented by their very ideals of fairness and tolerance from attacking government policy "with proper ferocity." The last time a liberal tried to change the course of South African history, Hope suggests, was in 1960, when a trout farmer named Pratt fired two bullets into the head of Hendrik Verwoerd but failed to kill him. "Such is the lamentable record of White opposition one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

might argue that Pratt is really our patron saint."

"Dissenting South Africans, in opposition and on the left . . . , if they cannot come to grips with their enemies . . . prefer to savage their friends." It is hard to believe Hope was not aware, writing these words, that they apply to himself as much as to anyone. But why should liberal whites have proved so fickle, irresolute, perhaps even spineless? And why should so natural a liberal as Hope—middle-class, individualist, pacific—have lost all faith in the relevance of liberal ideals? To answer these questions we need to look no further than the history of South Africa since 1960. It provides eloquent proof that reasonable suasion, legal argument, and peaceful protests are ineffectual against an adversary to whom *raisons d'état* are the only reasons, the law no more than a convenient mechanism for silencing opponents, and peaceful protest the risible recourse of the powerless.

Beyond suasion, argument, and protest, liberalism in South Africa has refused to venture, though numbers of individual liberals have, in despair and anger and regret, crossed the line into violence. In their personal capacities, and through organizations like the Black Sash, liberals have done what they can, within limits, to temper the harshest effects of apartheid. When the history of the times comes to be written, when political tempers have cooled, their exertions will, I am convinced, not be entirely forgotten.

As a political movement, however, South African liberalism has failed to conceive and implement forms of nonviolent action against the state. Its failure has been a failure of political imagination, and perhaps also of moral courage, though considering the ruthless, intimidating directness with which the state habitually reacts against those of its antagonists whom it defines as beyond the pale, one should recognize that the kind of moral courage being called for is considerable, even heroic. This failure, however humanly understandable, is the reason why many intelligent people, including Hope, have given up on liberalism as a credible force on the contemporary South African stage.

There was a time, in 1985, when it seemed possible that the life of Botha's regime might be measured in months, or if not in months, then in very few years indeed. By 1987, when Hope visited South Africa, a more sober reassessment was taking place. "The body politic of Afrikanerdom is far from moribund," Hope records. "For a people on their last legs they look remarkably vivacious." Euphoria had evaporated; bitterness was in the air, and a kind of undirected vengefulness. Caught between the pincers of a right-wing media assault and left-wing street theater, the Progressive Federal Party had to endure in addition the scorn of disappointed sympathizers to whom the future promised nothing save an apocalyptic war of right against left, white against black. Times are bleak indeed for liberals in South Africa. Their best hope may be to reconceive and rededicate themselves as a party of principle without pretensions to power.

J. M. COETZEE

J. M. Coetzee's most recent book is *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (Yale University Press).

Gauguin's 'Studio of the Tropics.'

THE KING OF DROPOUTS

BY JED PERL

EVERYONE WHO VISITS the monumental Gauguin retrospective currently at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., is drawn to the artist's dramatic self-portraits. Gauguin—who had the reputation for being quite a character, charismatic and also a little repellent—wants to attract our attention, and he does, with his olive complexion, slightly hooked nose, and slanting eyes. Gauguin's earliest self-portrait dates from 1885, when he was 37, with a career as a stockbroker behind him, a wife and five children to support, and little prospect of making a living by his art. Painted from time to time over a period of almost 20 years, the self-portraits show a man who looks us in the eye and gives very little away. His is a striking, but not exactly a handsome, face. The luxuriant moustache falling over the sensual lips suggests a hedonism that's at war with the hardness of the large, dark, utterly unrevealing eyes.

Even if you didn't know this man's life story, it would be possible to recognize in his face the curious mixture of toughness and self-indulgence we know from the faces of middle-aged friends and acquaintances who've chucked families and conventional careers in order to go off on their own. These renegades' stories often seem to have a clear—too clear—shape: that great break has been quite carefully arranged. (It's only the 20-year-old dropouts who don't know where they're headed.) The middle-aged folks who've done the things others only dream of doing are driven like the rest of us—with the difference that they're driven in anarchic, anti-establishment directions. In Gauguin's face we recognize the origin of their look, which is blissed out but also more than a little calculating. Gauguin is the first of a breed; he takes his fantasy into reality and sees, like it or not, how the two measure up. Who can be surprised that in the later self-portraits he looks like a hardened—and maybe even an angry—hedonist? This artist who was obsessed with myths of origin and sin has been to Paradise, met Eve, tasted the apple. He's an original—the king of middle-aged dropouts.

It's not just Gauguin's face that connects with a modern restlessness. His art is blissed out but calculating, too. The power of his work is in its sensuously off-balance color combinations: yellow and mauve; green and purple and orange. In his unconventional harmonies—which are heavenly, pure magic—Gauguin takes the instinctiveness of color about as far as it can go. This really is the kind of color that Gauguin saw in the South Seas, where he spent most of his life from 1891 to his death in 1903. But from the vantage point of Western art—which is, after all, his vantage point—Gauguin's electric color is iconoclastic, willfully arbitrary.

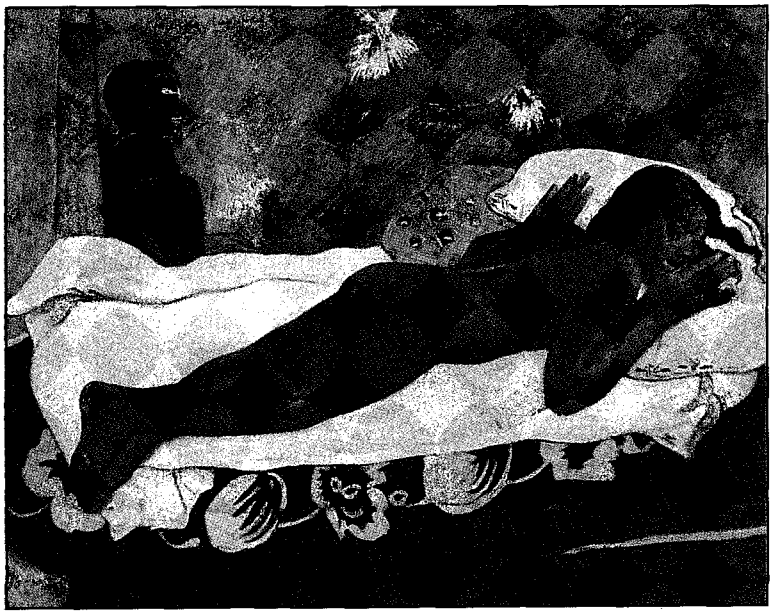
Jed Perl is the author of *Paris Without End: On French Art Since World War I*, to be published this fall by North Point Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One of the most beautiful paintings in the show is the 45-inch-high *Matamoe* (1892). This broad view of trees, thatched hut, figures, birds, and distant hills is like an outline of a Poussin that's been screwed up with crazy colors. The young man chopping wood amid the overarching landscape is a distant cousin of the figures in the late Poussin landscapes—a tiny being swamped by the immensity of nature. But the big impact doesn't carry through into a series of smaller interactions that hold your attention for long. I find I rapidly lose interest in a Gauguin painting. Matisse once remarked that the flowers he picked in his garden lost their chaotic beauty when he brought them indoors and arranged them. Gauguin is at his best when he isn't straining to arrange anything; the more he arranges things, the more his compositions tend to degenerate into designs. *Matamoe* is a gigantic yellow and pink and green bouquet of a landscape.

The show at the National Gallery starts slow with Gauguin's fairly conventional Impressionist paintings of the early 1880s. But as visitors move on to the work of the early 1890s, in which Gauguin finds his big flat shapes and odd color combinations and snaking rhythms, they relax into the artist's sleepily overheated mood. Gauguin's beaten-bronze harmonies are seen to advantage in a large retrospective. His flamboyance, which can put him at a disadvantage within a single canvas, where every little thing counts, expands into lyricism when the paintings are seen in profusion. Gauguin must have known this about his work, because he had a tendency to think in series. His 1898 show at the Galerie Ambroise Vollard in Paris was, according to one of the curators of the current exhibition, Richard Brettell, "conceived as a total work of art." The woodcut decorations for Gauguin's last home, the House of Pleasure on the Marquesan island of Hiva Oa, as well as some of the late panoramic woodcut cycles, also point toward the idea of an all-embracing work of art.

Gauguin's sculptures and woodcuts have received a good deal of attention in recent years. They define the outer perimeters of his experimentation and connect with a renewed interest in expressionism that has characterized the most highly publicized art of the early 1980s. (If the Gauguin retrospective isn't a show that artists care deeply about, it may be because expressionism isn't as much on people's minds as we've been led to believe. For many artists, the it-changed-my-life show of the decade will remain the National Gallery's Watteau retrospective in 1984, with its cooler and deeper emotions.) While many of Gauguin's early ceramics suggest the wilting prettiness of art nouveau, the later carvings are totally original: their broad, sometimes even gross, effects obliterate the fussy aestheticism that cripples so many European encounters with exotic styles. Hacking at a hunk of wood, creating woodcut illustrations for his own weird mythic writings, Gauguin is an eccentric inventing a bold new primitivist world. The relief carvings and colored prints bring something new into French art: an unembarrassed love affair with popular vernacular sources.



MANAO TUPAPAU, 1892

Who can say how much of the charming awkwardness of Gauguin's style is self-conscious primitivism, how much is failed sophistication? The very instability of Gauguin's effects—and our uncertainty as to his intentions—frequently works in his favor. If his influential mix of the South Seas and the Japanese, the early Greek and the early Renaissance never quite gels, this may be because irresolution is the ultimate expression of the man's restlessness. If Gauguin saw the perfected world of a masterpiece as a trap, it's a trap he never fell into.

Gauguin's athletic girl-goddesses form the emotional center of the National Gallery show. People stop and stare at the adolescent in *Manao tupapau* (1892), her skin the color of greenish-tinged coffee beans. She reclines on her stomach on a white sheet, her buttocks up in the air, her hands flat beside her, her face staring out at us. Behind her is a spirit person, one of Gauguin's mumbo-jumbo death figures; but the danger is built into the girl herself, whose slim, muscular body—like something out of early Greek sculpture—offers a resounding "Enough!" to all the pale curving ladies of 19th-century French art.

In a sense Gauguin, who'd done a detailed copy of Manet's *Olympia*, was just continuing Manet's example, creating an anti-myth within the myth of Woman in French art. But the girl in *Manao tupapau*, with her straight, boyish body, also marks the point where the myths darken and the exoticism of 19th-century art resolves into something wilder, beyond the control of civilization. Gauguin writes that the Tahitian women are "not very pretty really, according to European standards, yet beautiful." That beauty confuses Gauguin, and inspires him too.

In *Noa Noa*, the most famous text relating to the Tahitian adventure, Gauguin tells the story of a hike he takes with a young Tahitian man to a place where he can obtain rosewood for carving. The dreamy eroticism of this account carries over into many of the Tahitian nudes. "There we two were," Gauguin writes, "two friends, he a very young man and I almost an old one, in both body and soul, made old by the vices of civilization, and lost illusions. His supple animal body was gracefully shaped, he walked ahead of me sexless." This boy may have inspired the young male figure chopping wood in *Matamoe*. And on a deeper level, the arresting sexlessness of the backview Gauguin describes in *Noa Noa* may help us understand something about the women we

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

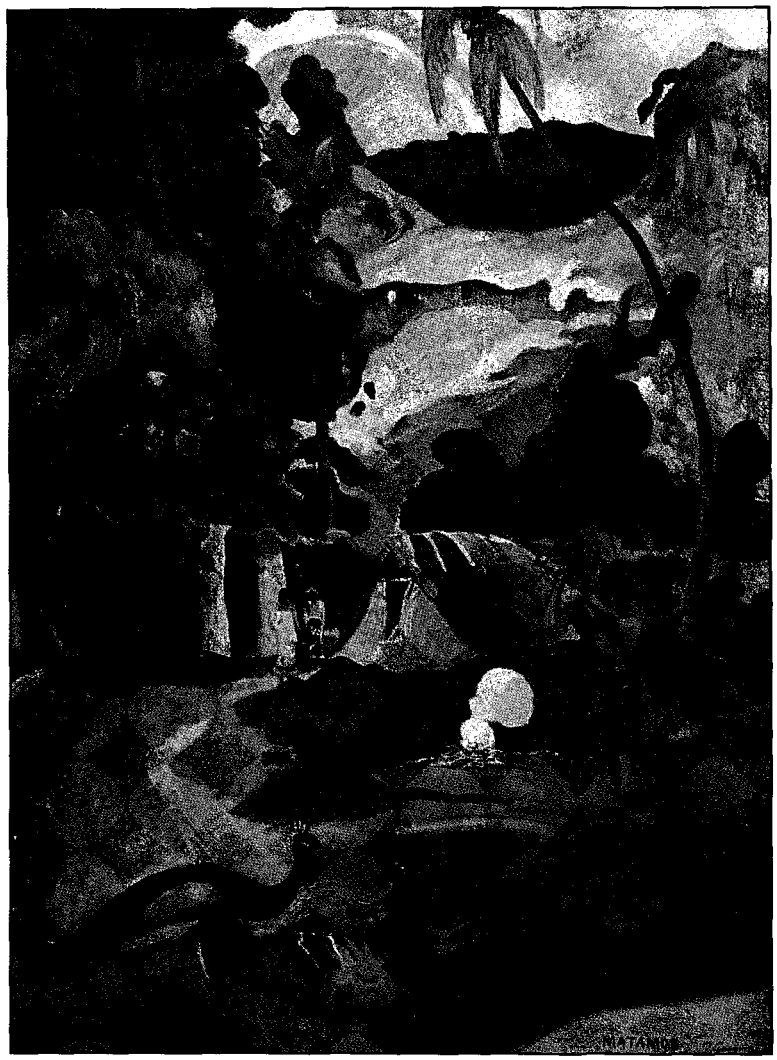
see from behind in some of the paintings—in *Manao tupapau*, and also in *Pape moe* (1893), where the female figure drinking from a waterfall is actually based on a photograph of a man.

Gauguin's description of his day with the Tahitian boy is like a journey into the mysteries:

> From all his youthfulness, from this perfect harmony with the natural surroundings, emanated a beauty, a perfume (*noa noa*) which enchanted my artistic soul. From this friendship, which was so well cemented by the mutual attraction between the simple and the compound, love was blossoming within me.
>
> And there were only the two of us.
>
> I had a sort of presentiment of crime, desire for the unknown, awakening of evil. Then too, a weariness of the role of the male who must always be strong, the protector having to bear the weight of his own heavy shoulders. To be for one minute the weaker being, who loves and obeys.
>
> I drew nearer, unafraid of laws, my temples pounding.
>
> The path had come to an end, we had to cross the river; my companion turned just then, his chest facing me.
>
> The hermaphrodite had disappeared; this was definitely a young man; his innocent eyes were as limpid as clear waters. Suddenly my soul was calm again.

The South Seas are a place where desire and evil and law-breaking and freedom intermingle. No doubt part of the attraction of Tahiti for Gauguin was that here he could be the stronger one, the charismatic foreigner with young native women at his beck and call. But of course he'd also gone to the South Seas to lose himself, and like so many dropouts he was caught in the odd situation of needing to control the out of control. (When Tahiti seemed too civilized, he fled to smaller and smaller islands.) The Gauguin show is about letting go; and Gauguin's importance rests in how he transformed the idea of letting go into new forms of beauty—mahogany skin, women with the muscular bodies of boys, a natural landscape composed of colors we Westerners only know from hothouse blooms.

Gauguin died in the Marquesas islands in 1903. His influence would probably never again be as great as it was in the couple of years right after his death, when Picasso and Matisse and many others first saw his work in all of its profusion. Gauguin's heedlessness set Matisse and Picasso on fire; it gave them their climb-any-mountain bravura.



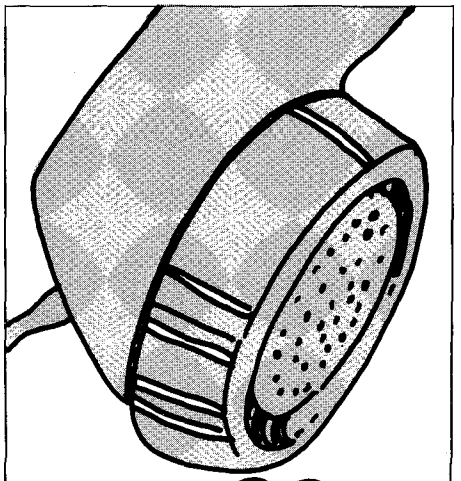
MATAMOE, 1892

A certain emotional remoteness is built into the very nature of an art that sets itself up at the farthest remove from "civilization," yet Gauguin's work may also seem remote now because so much of his own achievement has been dissolved into the masterpieces of those who followed him. Gauguin invented primitivism—and where would Picasso have been without that? His taste for sun and sea and overheated colors encouraged Matisse and Bonnard to discover a domesticated Tahiti on the Côte d'Azur in the years after World War I. There are moments in Gauguin's landscapes, with their epiphanies of purple-yellow-red-green, that seem like a first glimmer of the incandescent effects that Bonnard achieves in his masterpieces of the 1930s and '40s. At the National Gallery, where the Gauguin retrospective occupies the same galleries that held the great "Matisse in Nice" show less than two years ago, Gauguin's strange combination of cold egotism and sensual abandon offers a new key to Matisse, the coldest sensualist of them all. If Matisse always held onto the trappings of bourgeois life, those apartments he lived in in his later years were also a dropout's escapist fantasies, full of the huge green plants and gorgeous models that Gauguin had crossed oceans to see.

The organizers of the Gauguin retrospective have brought together a staggering array of material. It is probably inevitable that such a large, scholarly exhibition should at certain points seem to be working at cross purposes with the artist. When I left the show, I was anxious to dig into the catalog, but when I sat down with it at the airport while I waited for a flight back to New York, it took only a few minutes to realize that this was going to be duty reading. Right at the outset of the text the organizers state their "opposition to an exhibition centering on the artist's life." This is amazing. If ever there were a case in which the art flows straight out of the life, it's the case of Gauguin. The curators aren't in sync with the artist. How could a curator describe *Manao tupapau* as "a brilliant résumé of all the formal and theoretical progress [Gauguin] had made since his arrival in the South Seas"? How on earth could anyone call a Gauguin painting a résumé?

But Gauguin is there in Washington, and he is interesting in his profusion. He personifies a kind of to-hell-with-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE NEW REPUBLIC SUBSCRIBER SERVICE IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY.

Do you have any questions about payments? Change of address? Delivery or other subscription problems?

Just pick up your phone and dial our toll-free hotline at

800-525-0643

(In Co: 303-447-9330)

Our operators are specially trained to provide you with quick, efficient subscription service.

For most efficient service, please have a copy of your latest magazine handy. If you have a question concerning payment, please have a copy of your cancelled check in front of you so we can quickly resolve your problem over the phone.

Of course, we can still handle your business by mail if you prefer. Simply send us a copy of your address label from the front of your last magazine and your change of address or other correspondence to:

THE NEW REPUBLIC
P.O. Box 56515
Boulder, CO 80322-6515

Request for new subscriptions, renewals of current subscriptions and gift subscriptions should also be sent to the address above.

By phone or by mail, TNR Subscriber Service has never been easier

convention idealism we could use more of. He was a fool and a bully and a rat; but it's not clear you can do what he did without being all of those things too. Writing to Emile Bernard in 1890, before he'd left France, he dreamed of founding "the Studio of the Tropics. Anyone who wants to may come and join me. . . . Life doesn't cost a thing for a person who wants to live like the natives. Hunting suffices to supply you easily with food. Consequently, if I can close a deal, I am going to found what I have just said and live free and create art."

There's ballyhoo to this, but guts as well. Of course, those dreams had a down side—all the complications of colonial life, with its petty officials, gendarmes, jails, laws, priests, diseases—and these too are a part of the story, the story of every dropout who takes his dreams to a logical conclusion and sees just how complicated it really is. Though Matisse and Bonnard ultimately went farther than Gauguin by bringing it all back home, they wouldn't have been able even to begin if it hadn't been for him. This King of Dropouts speaks for the bit of a dropout in every one of us. At the end of the National Gallery show there's a painting of men riding horses along a bright pink beach. Here Gauguin's figures have become papery thin. The warm sensuality is gone. A quiet kind of pleasure emanates from this new world that Gauguin has, if only tenuously, achieved. The painting is stately and airy—a cool, almost toylike vision of paradise.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

STATURE CASE

To the editors:

In Eliot A. Cohen's discussion of three books on the Korean War ("The Hot Cold War," May 2), he writes: "No one would deny that the principal actors—Truman, MacArthur, Ridgway, Mao—lacked stature or human interest."

I would deny it. So would at least ten million others.

ROBERT SMITH
Lenox, Massachusetts

MUTUAL HOUSING

To the editors:

Robert Kuttner did a sound job of profiling existing public support for affordable housing ("Bad Housekeeping," April 25). His noting of the potential value of "tenant co-ops or . . . 'mutual housing' " was especially good. But he is wrong when he says, "There are only about 1,000 apartments built on the mutual model" in the U.S. Cooperative Services has been building and managing apartments on this model for 24 years and now has 3,500 units in operation and over 350 in development. All 20 of our housing developments are managed by volunteer-residents, who are supported by a strong central cooperative organization. HUD has recognized our membership-based, non-profit approach, and we *have* been able to work with federal programs such as Section 236. The mutual housing model has already served as a successful vehicle for the production and maintenance of affordable housing in the United States.

MARTHA SACHS
Cooperative Services, Inc.
Oak Park, Michigan

TRB, *from page 4*

ment to get off of people's backs. What is a more personal matter than raising children? Conservatives can propagandize all they want about the evils of day care. But they ought to leave the ultimate decision to parents themselves, without attempting to stack the deck.

This may seem like hypocritical advice when liberals have various bills in Congress promoting, subsidizing, and regulating day care, and Democrats plan to campaign in the fall as the party concerned about the challenges to working parents. But liberals and Democrats make no bones about their belief that the government has a healthy paternalistic role to play in making life better for the average American. More and better day care is something the average American seems to want, and Democrats can offer it without in any way seeming to betray their own principles.

In a way, the coming day-care debate is shaping up as a parody of the way we debate social policy in general. Democrats are trying to bribe voters with new spending programs while Republicans are trying to bribe people with a new tax cut. If events follow the customary pattern, we'll probably end up with both. And where will the money come from? Oh, we'll just tack it on to the deficit. That way, it's a problem for these children to deal with when they grow up. After all, it's for their own good.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Unhappy Days

ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO the *National Enquirer* published the most important article of our era. The headline: NEARLY EVERYONE IN AMERICA IS UNHAPPY. This was no exaggeration, and it wasn't related to the assassinations. People were just kind of, well, unhappy. They still are. After the crash last October everyone was unhappy because we were headed for a certain recession, or worse. Now, with all of the good news about stronger growth and lower unemployment, everyone is unhappy because things are going to overheat and inflation will come back. We used to be unhappy because there were so many presidential candidates and they took up so much of our viewing time. Now we're unhappy because there are just two left. A *Washington Post* editorial last week complained that incumbent members of Congress were getting re-elected too easily. But what if they were losing? The *Post* would complain that they were out of sync with what the voters really wanted. Face it. This is just an unhappy time, and Michael Dukakis is its living representative.

ON CAPITOL HILL everyone is unhappy about the "quality of life." The three candidates for Senate majority leader are talking about how they'll make the Senate a happier place to work: senators will have more time to spend with their families, etc. But many senators chose to be senators specifically to get away from their families. After all, they could have been farmers or insurance agents with offices at home.

ALSO ON THE quality-of-life front, four bills have been introduced to try to protect the 20,000 or so Capitol Hill aides from being exploited by their employers—which is to say by members of Congress. Right now they aren't protected by the civil rights, labor, and health laws that Congress has passed to protect everyone else. Legislators are hard pressed to explain this anomaly. They say that Congress is a "goldfish bowl," and if anything untoward is going on, then constituents can vote their representatives out. Of course, this argument can be applied to private industry too. If, say, an automobile company is treating its workers poorly, then the company can be exposed, and consumers will get angry and boycott their cars.

NOW WE CAN SEE the theory in action—a political science experiment in the congressional laboratory—and it doesn't hold water. Aides do get treated pretty badly. The culture of Congress has little to do with the culture of high-powered, glittery Washington. With the exception of maybe two dozen senators and a handful of representatives, members of Congress are misplaced Midwesterners, plunked down here in the alien corn. This congressional culture has a '50s feel to it. You hear lots of leering jokes of the sort that long ago went out of fashion in the rest of Washington; there's less Perrier-drinking here than downtown, more poorly fitting suits, and less overall self-consciousness. A boss who makes his employees pick up his kids at school or who suggests that a secretary might be smart to go on a date with him is not far out of line. Some of this may change. One of the bills could pass. With the suicide of Tom Pappas (a top aide to Maryland Representative Roy Dyson who imperiously ruled the social lives of staffers) and other revelations (a congressman reportedly made his employees prepare tuna fish sandwiches for his daughter's lunch), members of Congress seem to have become convinced that sometimes laws regulating behavior can have a benign effect. They can actually be less brutal than the discipline of the marketplace. And then there's the matter of hypocrisy, which seems to bother Congress today more than it used to. The other day on the floor Representative Lynn Martin quoted James Madison: "The House can make no law which would not have its full operation on themselves and their friends as well as all society." Good point.

SPEAKING OF political science experiments: I've long believed that one of the problems with the world is that we keep applying the model of Newtonian physics. We're caught up in ideas like the third law—the one about action and reaction. So when the Israelis bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor or someone kills Abu Jihad (hey! I'm not saying the Israelis did it), or when the U.S. bombs Libya, there's supposed to be an equal and opposite reaction from the other side. But life isn't like that. The Japanese didn't fight harder after Hiroshima. And the horrors of Libyan terrorism unleashed—which is what we were supposed to see after the bombing of the Tripoli—just haven't materialized. Another metaphor from physics is the one of the pot boiling with a lid on it. Turn up the heat and the lid blows off the pot, or the pot explodes if the lid is on too tight. This is the reaction that the boiling masses are supposed to have to harsh oppression. But again, the metaphor doesn't work. Look at the Soviet Union. I traveled to both Azerbaijan and Armenia during a more oppressed era. The friendly natives were quite docile. No more. My own theory is that most Americans adopted the extremely flawed Physics Model of Politics in high school—mainly because we studied the European revolutions of 1848 and Newton at around the same time. It all seemed to fit together. Well, it doesn't.

SOMETHING ELSE that doesn't fit is a particular picture of the president. The most shocking revelation in the new books about Reagan is that he is not comfortable in his skin. It's all a triumph of acting. The thing I thought I liked most about him was that he seemed so at ease with life, so normal—the opposite of, say, flinty, nervous, controlled Governor Dukakis. But it turns out I was wrong. We already know that the president has little contact with his children. Now Donald Regan says that he seems alienated from everyone except Nancy and is passive about his job and much of his life. In Gail Sheehy's new book, *Character*, she makes the same point even more strongly: "Friends—he has none. Not among the old California crowd. They attached themselves to Ronald Reagan for their own advancement. Not among the Zipkin-Bloomingdale-Sinatra pack. Those were Nancy's pals." Not Deaver or Meese or even Laxalt. "In reality," writes Sheehy, "Reagan has no human connections in any meaningful sense." So even Ronald Reagan is unhappy. Or ought to be. There's a certain solace in this for some people. If I'm miserable and I work hard and suffer for humanity, Reagan shouldn't be so loose. He's not. Now we know.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nuclear energy can help America find a way out of our dangerous dependence on foreign oil

Oil imports are increasing to dangerous levels. As the uncertainty in the Persian Gulf continues, the ability to rely on America's nuclear energy becomes more important than ever.

During the 1973 embargo, when we were importing 35% of our oil, prices skyrocketed as supply nose-dived. In the last 18 months, America's dependence on OPEC oil has increased dramatically. We're even more dependent now than we were in 1973. Oil imports have risen by over 25% while domestic oil production has fallen nearly 10%. Looking to the future, the situation is even worse.

In fact, if projections from the Department of Energy are correct, America may be importing as much as 50% of our oil by 1990. That would seriously jeopardize our national energy security.

Nuclear Energy Saves Oil

Electricity generated from America's 109 commercial nuclear electric plants saves us over 750,000 barrels of oil a day. Every day. Without nuclear energy's contribution, we would need to import even more foreign oil than we already do.

Nuclear Energy for the Future

America's use of electricity has been growing steadily to fuel our growing economy. At current growth rates, electricity demand will overtake supply in the early 1990s.

New nuclear electric plants should be in planning *now*. But they are not, despite the fact that most Americans believe that nuclear energy is important and that we will need more.

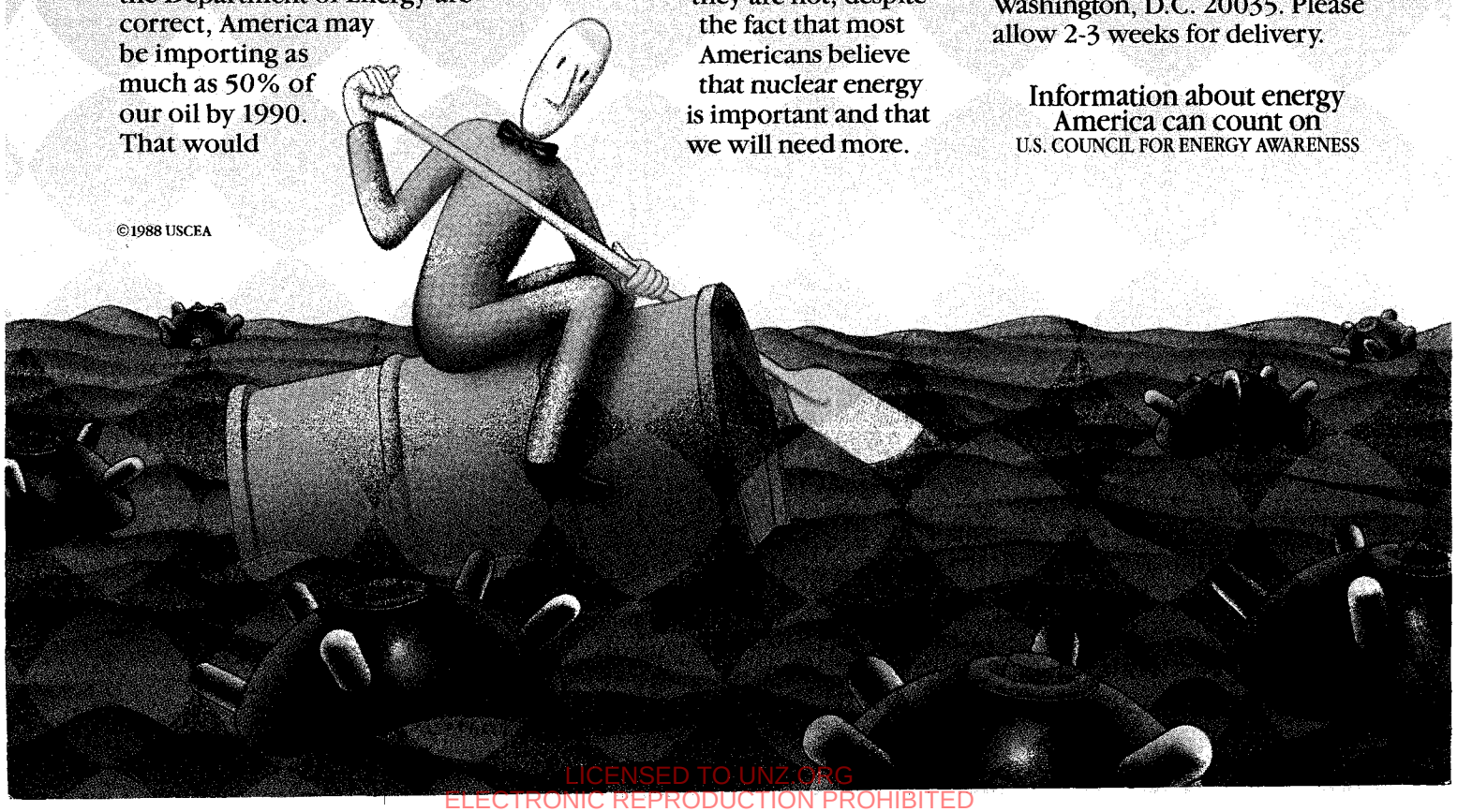
Too many financial, political, licensing, and regulatory uncertainties stand in the way of America's being able to fully utilize its nuclear energy resources. For example, it has taken some plants as long as 12 years to be completed. If nothing changes, that means that a plant begun now might not be operating before the year 2000.

As America's economy continues to grow, America must find ways to keep pace with its growing electricity needs. Nuclear energy can play a major role in meeting those needs as well as keeping us less dependent on foreign oil.

For a free booklet on energy independence, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66103, Dept. NS21, Washington, D.C. 20035. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Information about energy America can count on
U.S. COUNCIL FOR ENERGY AWARENESS

©1988 USCEA



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED